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C O N T E N T S

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 2001

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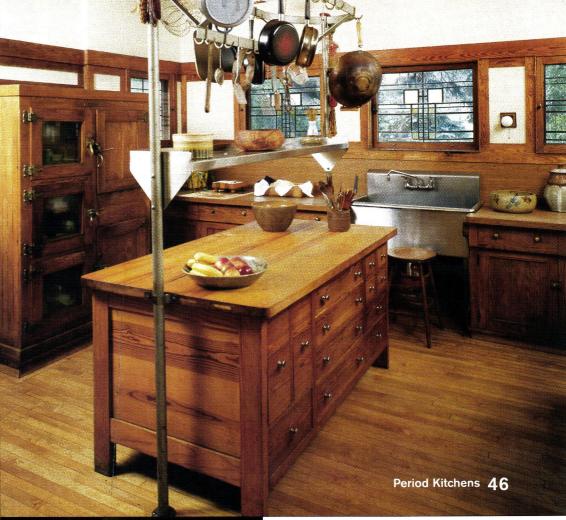
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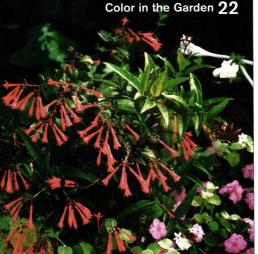




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photo by: TOM RIDER



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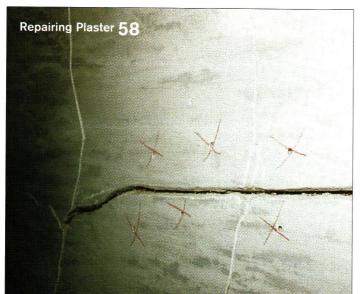
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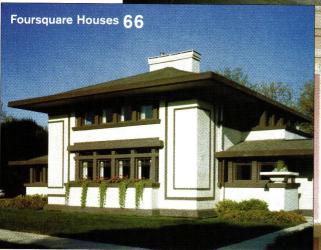
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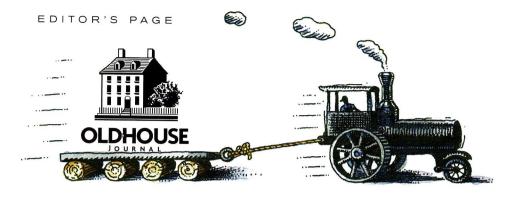




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An 1886 illustration of Pioneer Mills in

Georgetown.

On the Move!

change of seasons is a good time to seek new challenges and fresh vistas, so we're happy to announce that Old-House Journal is on the move again. By the time you receive this issue, the OHJ staff will be fully unpacked at our latest editorial home in the historic Georgetown section of Washington, D.C., and part of

a new corporate family called Restore Media, LLC. It's exciting news, but it does not stop there.

Many OHJ readers will recognize the other member in this growing group: the Restoration & Renovation Exhibition &

Conference. Since their debut in 1993. the folks at Restoration & Renovation have provided a unique venue for quality products, services, and education in cities across the continent, and OHJ has been a player at every show. Now we have the opportunity to work even more closely to bring together the best in information, ideas, and people in the world of old houses and the preservation of the built environment.

Along with this happy match of historically minded endeavors comes a suitably historic address. OHJ offices are now within a brick-walled complex that a century ago included a flour mill in a water-powered industrial neighborhood. It should be no surprise. A few steps outside the front door runs the channel of the C&O

> Canal, the 184-mile waterway that linked the western reaches of Maryland to the urban shores of the Potomac River. Now a National Historical Park, the canal is a pleasant sight to see out a downtown window, and a handy way

to remember our new address. To send letters to the editor, article queries, or Remuddling photos, address your letters to:

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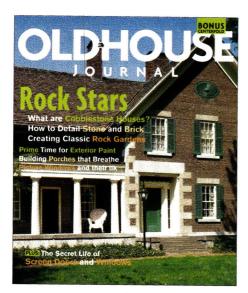
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PICTURE PERFECT

Thank you for the article "Picture This" [Design in Time, July/August 2001]. Seeing writer Neal Vogel sitting in front of the picture widow at Christmastime brought back memories of the home I grew up in—a 1968 Garrison Colonial in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. The living room picture window had bookend sidelights as well. I didn't know such a seemingly simple feature had such a rich history. Keep the history articles like this one coming and thanks for the memories.

PATRICIA DOWNEY
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Correction: In the article "Picture This," captions on Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House and the glass house of Philip Johnson were reversed. The Farnsworth House is the top right and the Philip Johnson House is top left.

DECORATIVE SCREENS

Where can I find out more about Baltimore's painted screens, including where to get them and how to paint them myself? I was thrilled to see a story on them ["The Secret Life of Screen Doors and Windows," July/August 2001]; I've been in love with them since I visited Baltimore years ago.

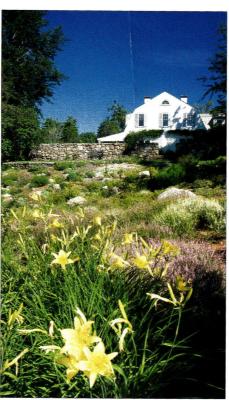
CAROL FINCH McKinney, Texas For more information on painted screens or to order a step-by-step instructional video taught by screen artist Dee Herget, contact Elaine Eff at the Painted Screen Society of Baltimore, P.O. Box 12122, Baltimore, MD 21281.

THE LAST WORD

I love the "Remuddling" section of your magazine. With each new issue, I can't wait to get to the last page to see the latest travesty. The photo in the July/August issue takes the cake. The house truly looks like something out of a miniature golf course. Remuddling is a lesson to us all on what not to do to our old houses. Thanks.

JAMES WALSH PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Correction: This photograph of the Fells, the John Hay Estate in New Hampshire, was miscredited in the July/August issue. The photographer was William H. Johnson.



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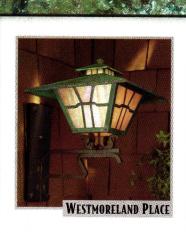
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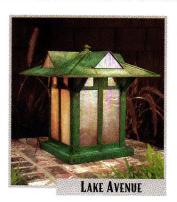
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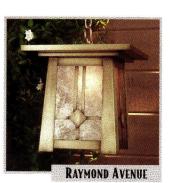


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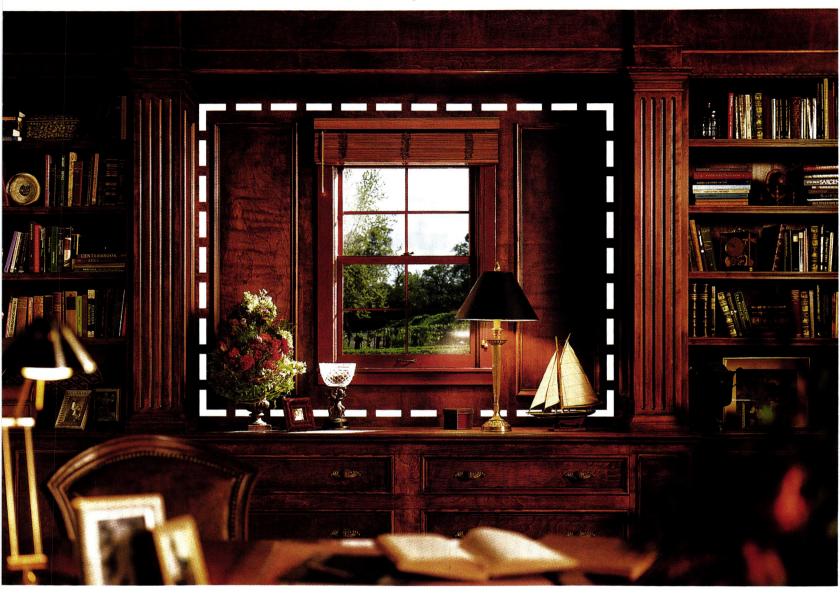
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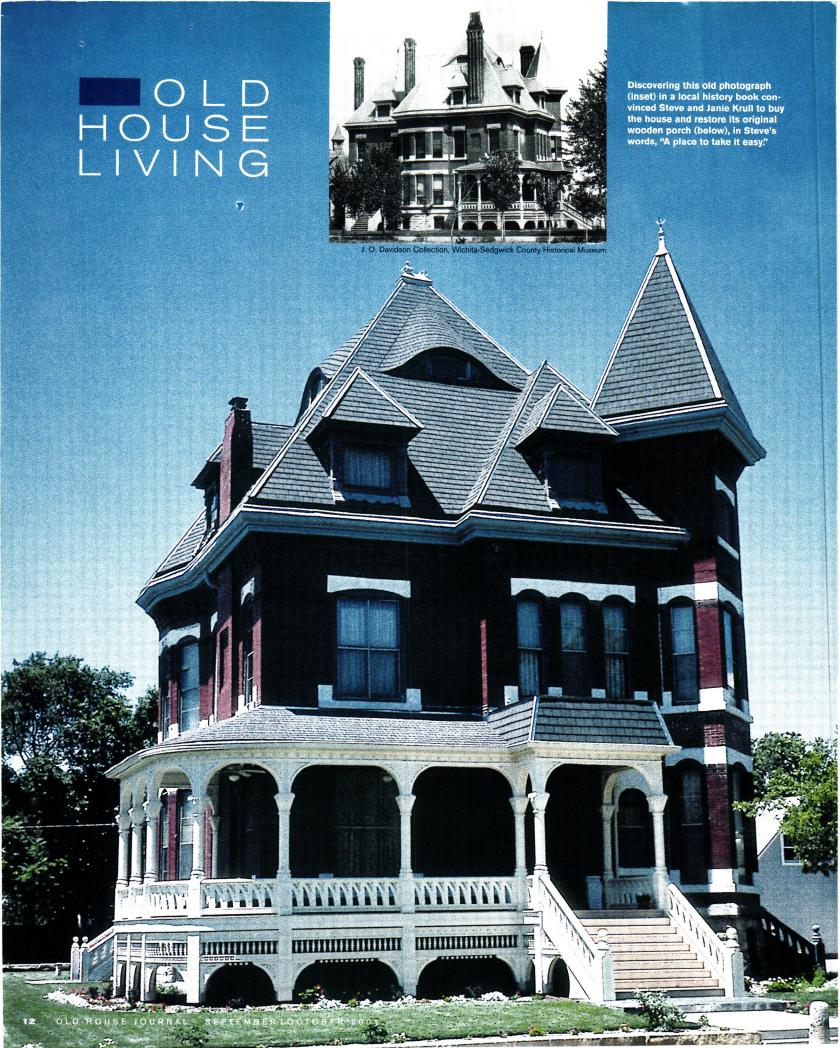
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Yours, Mine, and Ours by Jeff Tully

Given back its original wrap-around porch, a Queen Anne embraces a newly melded family.

n the 1968 film comedy "Yours, Mine and Ours," Henry Fonda plays a widower with 10 children and Lucille Ball a widow with eight. The two find love and happiness in a "dignified old Victorian home"-but not before the daunting Queen Anne-style residence presents the blended family with trials we all know well, including antique plumbing and a leaky roof. By the end of the movie, the Beardsley family has galvanized around the birth of the newlyweds' first child (or their 19th, depending on how you do the math).

Steve and Janie Krull of Wichita, Kansas, discovered that in the real world, you don't need nearly so many children to be challenged by life in a mammoth old house. The couple, who combined their seven children and a cat named Peppermint in the historic Pratt-Campbell House, have their own take on the Beardsley tale. Rather than the birth of a child, however, their collective family's 14-month laborof-love was the reconstruction of the building's original 19th-century wrap-around front porch.

The 5,600-square-foot mansion, built in 1887 for a local lumberman, was in less than stellar condition when Janie and Steve first toured the property in 1992. Having served as a boarding house, nursing home, and single-family residence, it suffered from years of sporadic maintenance and neglect, particularly on the exterior.

The dismal façade wasn't the only reason they didn't buy the house that year. They were still both single parents living



Jeff Tully



Top: Steve and Janie's blended family. Above: Demolition was a messy affair, but the porch was done in time for Janie to move in with her piano. Left: The couple thought that the 1903 brick porch made the house look foreboding.



City of Wichita Historic Preservation Office

OLD HOUSE LIVING

separately in a nearby town. Yet Steve, who had always wanted to buy and fix up an old house, couldn't get the place out of his mind. Once they decided to meld their families—their children ranged in age from 11 to 26—they needed a home that combined

Steve's dream with plenty of space. "We looked at different kinds of houses," he says, but nothing ever compared to this place." At this point, though, the house wasn't officially for sale. Janie, a nurse who drove by it often on the way to work at a nearby

medical center, had always thought something was just not quite right with its brick and concrete front porch.

One day, while looking through a local history book, the Krulls found a photograph of the house with its original wooden front porch. They would later learn that it had been replaced sometime after 1903—the date was stamped on both a column and a brick—with the Arts & Crafts inspired design.

"If you looked at the house with the 1903 brick porch, the style just didn't fit the house," says Steve. "The porch made the house look foreboding. Once we saw the picture, we saw a whole different house. That's what we wanted. A front porch that belonged. A place to sit and take it easy."

In August 1997 they approached the owners with an offer. In terms of square footage, they got a bargain. The porch, however, was not only inharmonious but most of it was either deteriorated or missing. "Pigeons were everywhere," says Janie. "The ceiling was collapsing, the brick was falling apart, and the concrete balusters were in bad shape."

Because blueprints didn't exist, the Krulls, their architect, and general contractor approximated the original porch's dimensions and appearance. Excavation revealed evidence of the original footings and the radius of the wrap-around deck. They had their prized photograph blown up to reveal more porch details, and incorporated elements from an original side porch in their new front porch design.

The Krull's craftsman and general contractor, Willard Ebersole (see "Wheels of Fortune," August 1997 OHJ), chose a variety of woods for the porch elements and devised a system to keep the new porch columns free from rot. They had originally planned to build the entire porch of redwood but substituted species such as cypress and Douglas fir, which are both durable and less expensive. A local mill made custom blades to turn the new porch columns



Photos Jeff Tully

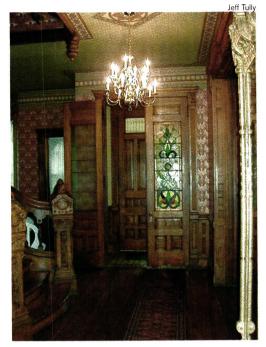
QUEEN

OWNERS: Steve and Janie Krull LOCATION: Wichita, Kansas DATE OF HOUSE: 1887 ON-GOING PROJECTS: Raising their combined family of seven

of interest: The couple found a historic photo of the house with its original porch. This photo enabled them to replace the existing brick porch with a replica of the original.



Top: Enlarging the historic photo they found revealed details in the original porch elements. Above: Two-year-old Samantha Schmitz, the first grand-child, enjoys the view from the wrap-around deck.



The interior of the Pratt-Campbell House had remained largely unaltered, and previous owners had applied the reproduction wallpaper. Janie's big job was cleaning the extensive woodwork.

and cut other decorative millwork.

Construction began in February 1998, and Janie and her children moved into the house in June. She had given Ebersole only one absolute requirement. "I had to have front porch steps for our move-in, particularly for my piano." Steve and his children moved in after the couple's July wedding.

Three years later they have no regrets, although it was hard getting used to a house three times bigger than the ones they'd lived in previously. Shortly after they moved in, Janie's 17-year-old son Aaron was looking for her. "Mom?" he called, his voice echoing down three flights of stairs. "I'm in the butler's pantry," she replied. "Where's that?" he asked. "Just follow my voice," she called back.

As with most old houses, all that extra space wasn't configured to 21st-century lifestyles. There are only two bathrooms and one tub among nine people. According to Janie, the house can handle "only one water

task at a time." A couple more bathrooms are on the to-do list, as are repointing exterior masonry and adding central air conditioning. "For our first anniversary, we gave ourselves a window air conditioner for the master bedroom," Steve says.

Guests often ask Steve and Janie what brought them to buy the old Pratt-Campbell house and undertake such an expensive chore. They answer that the porch has come to symbolize the converging of their families under one roof. "The porch is our oasis from the world," says Steve. "It is such a great place to entertain, to visit with neighbors." Once the rubble was cleared away, it adapted to a variety of events, such as the "murder mystery" parties one of the children loves to host. "We live in a piece of our community's history," adds Steve. "You just can't put a price tag on that."

Jeff Tully, a preservationist and a writer, is a native of Wichita.

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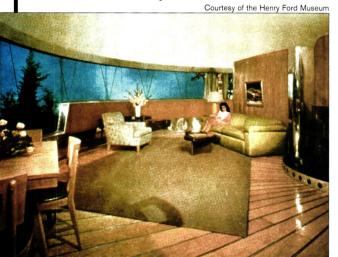
OLDHOUSE JOURNAL

Rebuilding Bucky's Baby

hink you're having a tough time matching the crystals on your Victorian chandelier or finding parts for your 1930s furnace? Then imagine what it would be like to piece together a one-of-a-kind home, exposed to the elements for 50 years but never actually lived in.

That's been the task facing James Ashby, who coordinates the crew reassembling R. Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House for the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Fuller designed the hexagonal aluminum house—supported by tension cables from a central mast—in 1929, to promote a modern furniture collection for Marshall Field's department store in Chicago. Fifteen years later, he formed a partnership with Beech Aircraft in Wichita, Kansas, which was looking for a new product to keep its assembly lines humming after World War II. The prototype was still being finetuned when the idealistic Fuller had a falling out with his financial backers.

Designed so it could be taken apart and moved easily, the 36'-diameter structure now at the museum spent several decades attached to a home outside Wichita. The



The Dymaxion House was designed to offer mobile, affordable houses to returning vets.

owners painted, weather-sealed, and modified it in ways that Fuller never intended, and it never fully functioned as he envisioned, with revolving closets, mechanized shelves, and a device to collect and remove rainwater from the attic. Conservators disassembled its 3,600 pieces and moved them to Dearborn in 1991.

"The first thing we had to do was figure out exactly what it was that we were trying to put together," says Ashby. He had just finished a disser-

tation on preserving historic aluminum when a friend saw an ad for the Dymaxion job. "It became obvious that this prototype had been developing rapidly with a lot of changes. There were a lot of things not worked out or refined when Fuller walked out in frustration." The crew removed the front of a closet, for example, only to find a different style closet underneath.

While owners of Queen Anne or Arts & Crafts houses can now find a wealth of

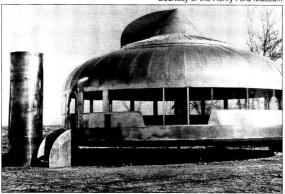


ew Orleans is a friendly city—up to a point. A *cheval-de-frise* is a spiky structure intended to discourage intruders from scaling walls and invading courtyards. It can be as simple as a line of broken glass set in masonry, but New Orleans and other southern cities sometimes raise this feature to a fine art, as with the one above.

Learn more about the architecture of New Orleans' French Quarter by taking the new ArmchairTour from Eden Street Software. The company also has CDs on Savannah, Charleston, and St. Augustine. Explore by clicking one of 2,000 sites, or take one of 40 specialized tours, such as Italienate houses. In New Orleans, if you're feeling pious, take a church and convent tour. Feeling wicked? Join the tavern and bordello tour. Zoom in on an ornamental iron railing for a closer look, or pan 360 degrees around a parlor.

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Courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum



Fuller loved the idea that you couldn't distinguish his house parts from airplane parts.

restoration specialists to supply tin ceilings or Stickley-style furniture, the mid-1940s is a relatively unexplored period among restorationists, Ashby observes.

"The materials we're working with are both fairly contemporary and very particular. We don't have a lot of resources to draw on for repairing aluminum or Naugahyde," which was used on the interior walls. The crew relied on experts in the auto and aircraft industries as much as they did the historic building community. One result: After they removed corrosion from aluminum surfaces, they had the material heat treated to prevent its deteriorating again.

Then there were the ingenious clips Fuller used to attach the house's plywood floor to its beams. All of them were badly corroded, and the team spent a year finding someone who could copy the originals. One of the final tasks faced this summer was the installation of an 18′ rooftop vent, which rotates in the wind on a wheel hub of a 1942 Buick.

The restoration was scheduled for completion in October after two years' work, and despite some remaining unknowns, Ashby was optimistic about meeting the deadline. Museum visitors have been able to watch his team in action through round windows in a display wall that explains the restoration process. Via a "Conservator's Journal" on the museum's web site, people all over the world have been able to follow their progress.

Visit the Conservator's Journal by clicking "Online Exhibits" at www.hfmgv.org. You can even watch a video clip of the revolving closet. To get additional information about the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, call (313) 271-1620.

Interview with an Iron Man

ny conversation with Henry J. Magaziner, FAIA, quickly takes a broad perspective on architecture, from icons like Frank Furness of his native Philadelphia, to early days working for the great industrial architect Albert Kahn, to his own award-winning career as National Regional Architect for the National Park Service. We caught up with him recently while he was on tour promoting his first book, at a time in life when most of us would be happy to rest on our laurels.

Gordon Bock: Many readers remember your OHJ article on ironwork (August 1997). What sparked your interest in the subject? Henry Magaziner: I went to a wonderful high school with special courses for kids planning to become architects. We took shop classes in carpentry, metalwork, pattern-making for casting iron—all the basic processes for understanding how building materials are made. I also used to walk home from school admiring the great ironwork on Delancy Street. Years later, I thought "New York and New Orleans have books on their ironwork, why not Philadelphia?"

GB: So you decided to write it?

HM: I began in 1992 by taking over 500 snapshots of examples I found interesting or important. Then, after doing my research, I had the best reshot by the prize-winning photographer Robert D. Golding. Starting about 1840 Philadelphia became a major center for iron production with over 200 foundries. Wood and

Join OHJ in New Orleans

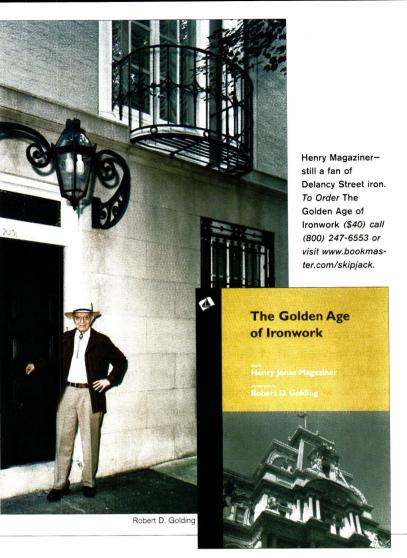
ome visit the staff of Old-House Journal at the Restoration & Renovation Exhibition & Conference September 6 to 8 in the Fairmont Hotel, adjacent to the city's French Quarter. Attendees can see preservation in action through the Preservation Resource Center's Great Neighborhood "Sellabration." A complimentary shuttle service will take them to historic proper-

ties for sale within the city's 15 historic districts on Saturday, September 8. You'll still have plenty of time to see the specialized array of products and services in the exhibit hall and attend lectures by distin-

guished speakers, such as keynoter Lloyd Vogt, architect and author of New Orleans Housewatcher's Guide.

In 2002 the national Restoration & Renovation Ex-





Perot, the firm that shipped so many railings and fences to New Orleans, like the famous "cornstalk fence," was based here.

GB: Also Samuel Yellin, the master artist-blacksmith, right?

HM: Yes. His shops in West Philadelphia were a veritable museum of great ironwork he had picked up all over the world, French and Spanish especially. In fact, Yellin taught a course in building crafts that I attended. All us boys used to make fun of him because, coming from Poland in 1906, he had a heavy accent. Yellin's extraordinary work is in 39 states.

GB: What was it like working for Albert Kahn?

HM: It was the early days of World War II and Kahn had over 450 men in his employ. This was before computer graphics, of course, and drafting was done with T-squares on big sheets—sometimes dozens of drawings to a sheet. Kahn closed the office every Friday night and over the weekend he would review the work of every draftsman, comparing scores of details. He had a mental picture of each sheet. He was a genius.

GB: Any thoughts on today's architecture?

HM: I'm very interested in the houses going up these days. Technology has come so far that houses are now essentially prefabricated. The first prefabs though were actually the cast-iron building facades of the 19th century. I like Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, even though the titanium is starting to discolor. As an architect, you can't ignore the interaction of metals and their environment. Congress hasn't gotten around to changing the laws of expansion and contraction, you know.

hibition & Conference will be held March 20 to 23 in Boston, where show owner Restore Media, LLC will launch several new features.

- New Product Showcase, a special area where exhibitors can display new products. It's intended to complement Techniques & Technologies Showcase, a theater-style presentation area that has been a regular feature of the show for years.
- R&R Live, an area where artisans and tradespeople explain and demonstrate the crafts behind period building restoration and historically inspired new construction.

- The largest number of exhibits ever, with more than 300 participating companies.
- The Palladio Awards (co-produced with *Traditional Building* and *Period Homes* magazines), honoring projects for excellence in restoration,

adaptive re-use, sympathetic additions, and reinterpretation of traditional forms and styles in new construction.

As always, there will be an extensive program of panel discussions, lectures, workshops, and seminars, with continuing education and professional development credits for planners,

architects, interior designers, landscape architects, and contractors.



nandrenovation.com.

Attendees at the Restoration & Renovation Conference & Exhibition will be across the street from New Orleans' facinating French Quarter, where they can explore architecture as diverse as the ornate ironwork at far left, and the simple 1821 Creole cottage, left.

For more information

call Restore Media at (800) 982-

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Photos courtesy of ArmchairTour

The Inn at Mitchell House, Chestertown, Maryland

B&B FOCUS

uring the War of 1812 Sir Peter Parker, commander of the Kent County Militia in Maryland, was mortally wounded in a skirmish. He died on the kitchen table of a nearby home and, other embalming fluids lacking, was shipped home to England in a cask of rum. Some 170 years later, Tracy Stone had been working in the Reagan White House and her husband Jim was teaching in Washington, D.C., when they decided to rearrange their lives to start a family. Some 90 miles north they found the brick Georgian manor house where Parker met his demise. An owner named Mitchell had expanded it in 1825 and it had been operating as a B & B for four years. Guests who are nature lovers can just loll around on the Stones' 10 acres, gazing at the pond. Those who want a big dose of history can drive a mere 10 miles to Chestertown, where the Chester and Sassafras rivers spill into the Chesapeake Bay. You can take a self-guided tour of Georgian and Victorian mansions along its brick sidewalks, or sign up for a guide April through October. Tracy Stone says not to worry about the ghost of Sir Peter, although guests



in one bedroom sometimes report being brushed by the invisible wagging tail of Gunner, a hunting dog who disappeared in a nearby marsh 80 years ago. "I haven't met Gunner," she says, "but our pets behave strangely in that room." 6 rooms, \$90-\$110, 8796 Maryland Parkway, Chestertown, MD, (410) 778-6500, www.chestertown.com/mitchell/

Today's Classic Homes

he third season of "Today's Classic Homes" is airing in September on PBS. This past summer Old-House Journal contributing editors and architectural historians James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell went behind the scenes at the Kelnepa House

with host Mitch McDaniel and producer John Kennison to take a closer look at the restoration of the 1924 riverfront estate in Jacksonville, Florida. "The house is undergoing extensive rehabilitation and additions," says Massey. The couple commented on the compatibility of



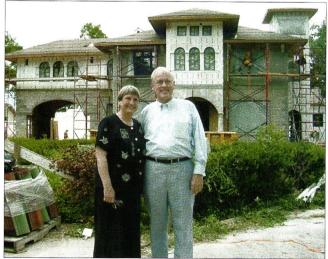
Left: James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell at the site of the Kelnepa House, a 1920s Mediterranean-style villa in Jacksonville, Florida. Above: Maxwell during an interview on the set of "Today's Classic Homes."



the additions, noting for instance that a new colonnade retained the character

of the 1920s Mediterranean-style villa. Maxwell believes viewers will also be interested to see the 3,000-pound granite

tub in the second-floor bath. "This speaks to the infrastructure of the house," she says. The program will begin airing after September 16. Check your local PBS station for times and dates.



Courtesy of Today's Classic Homes









Garden writers of a century ago urged home horticulturists to chuck garish annuals for more sophisticated tones.

High Priestesses of Color

By Nina Koziol

Color-for-color's-sake annuals—carpet bedding being the prime example—held court in Victorian gardens for decades. Then early in the 20th century a chorus of garden writers made a plea for a more thoughtful use of color. Rather than setting disposable annuals in beds shaped like clocks or the gardener's initials, they recommended arranging long-lived perennials and bulbs in sensuous drifts against a fence or along a path. Colors might range from cool pastels and white, grey, or silver, to bright crimson, orange, yellow, and blue. Whatever the choice, they advised gardeners to think about bloom time and constantly changing patterns. They would even have to learn something about the psychology of color, and employing hue to create optical illusions.

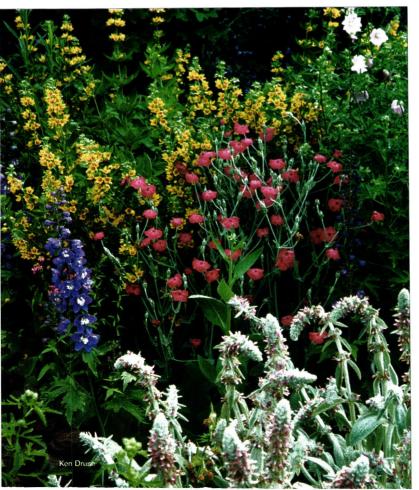
Horticultural realism was giving way to impressionism. Gertrude Jekyll, the English artist turned garden designer and writer, gets credit for promoting this more sophisticated approach on both sides of the Atlantic. Her book, Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden (1908), touted expansive borders with progressions of color and a variety of textures and forms. She planted mounds next to uprights, and vase shapes adjacent to arching stems; flowers with panicles or spikes

> next to trumpets or daisies; coarse, wide leaves near foliage that was feathery or lancelike.

Many American garden writers of the period espoused a return to "old-fashioned" flowers, such as irises, phlox, and daisies. Annuals still had a place when they fit the new philosophy. Homeowners again sought fragrant old favorites like tobacco flower (Nicotiana), heliotrope, and stocks.

Yet in The Old-Fashioned Garden (1903), Alice Morse Earle derided intensely colored annuals of decades past. "It has been the custom of late to sneer at crimson in the garden...if I could turn all magenta flowers pink or purple, I should never think further about garden harmony, all other colors would adjust themselves," she wrote.

Earle and her peers popularized cool-colored borders of green, blue, and



violet. These often included white, pale yellow, and pink flowers mixed with silver foliage to evoke a restful feel. To warm a scene, they combined red, orange, and yellow.

For gardens that could accommodate a lengthy border, garden writers often recommended placing cool colors at the far end to make the border appear even longer. With cool-colored flowers at both ends and warm colors in the middle, visitors could stroll the border's length and experience a living color wheel.

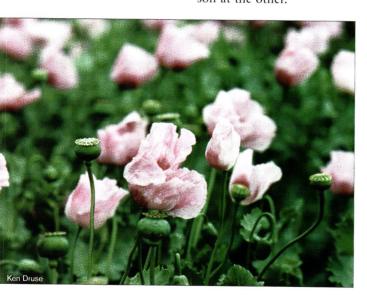
Predating Jekyll was Celia Thaxter, whose garden on New Hampshire's Appledore Island was illustrated for *An Island Garden* (1893) by impressionist Childe Hassam. Describing Thaxter's landscape in *Content in a Garden* (1901), Candace Wheeler noted that it included white poppies that drifted into pale pinks and coral to deep rose.

Of her own cottage garden in Pennsylvania, Wheeler wrote, "Many of the gorgeous effects are produced not by space, but by a gradual leading up to the masses of color." The plants in her border made the transition from one end with red, orange, yellow, and white to blue, pink, lavender, and crimson at the other.

"Color is the chief glory of the garden," wrote Mabel Cabot Sedgwick in *The Garden Month by Month* (1907), which featured a chart of 63 perennial colors to be used in a formal or a wild garden. The book was a boon for gardeners because it gave them the approximate bloom dates (in the Boston area), along with the color, height, spread, and cultural information for hundreds of perennials. Since most perennials have a short bloom period, Sedgwick took some of the guesswork out of keeping up a continuous color display.

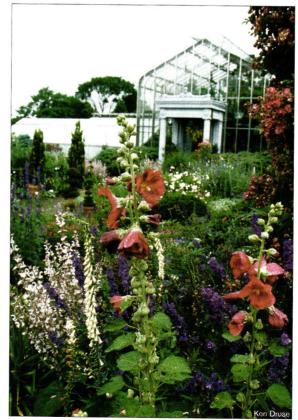
Helena Rutherford Ely weighed in with color advice in *A Woman's Hardy Garden* (1915), pointing out the way certain colors predominate at different times. The soft colors of her iris, peonies, lilacs, and sweet Williams matched the soft spring sunlight in May. Then Canterbury bells, foxgloves, and larkspurs brought blue and white to her garden's canvas. By July, the color scheme evolved to red and white supplied by poppies, phlox, crimson ramblers, and penstemon. White and yellow dominated her August garden when lilies, marigolds, sunflowers, coreopsis and gaillardias took center stage.

The prolific garden writer Mrs. Francis (Louisa



Top: There's no need for all your flowers to match your house the way the peachy pink lupines echo the color of this siding, but you'll paint a more eyepleasing scene if you remember that your house also figures in your landscape color equation.

Above: Rose-pink poppies were a favorite of garden writer Mrs. Francis King.



Left: At Ware Hill in the Bronx, New York, deep red hollyhocks harmonize with purple delphiniums and pink digitalis, while pale yellow offers a soft note of contrast. Right: Sedum 'Autumn Joy' can be tricky to combine with other colors, since it matures from a bright pink to a more autumnal reddish brown.

Yeomans) King encouraged gardeners to be mindful of both color and texture. In her own garden the spikes of pale pink Canterbury bells loomed up behind a mound of airy baby's breath (*Gypsophila*). Next to this combination arose the dramatic creamy yellow and green sword-shaped leaves of *Iris pallida*, set off by a dozen tall silvery stems of velvety lamb's ears (*Stachys*).

Among all this pink and silver, King sowed seeds of pale blue forget-me-nots and rose-pink poppies. In *The Well-Considered Garden* (1915) she wrote, "To see three or four of these poppies in full bloom among the white mist of gypsophila...the oat-green of the poppy leaves below, is to see something more delicately beautiful than often occurs in gardens."

Like the carpet beds before them, the new perennial borders continued to evolve in color and content. Marjorie Sewell Cautley's widely read *Garden Design* (1935) set down additional recipes for color. Bright colors, such as red and orange, in the foreground of a perennial border would make it look longer, she said, by seeming to advance toward the viewer. The softer tones of blue, yellow, silver, and grey at the opposite ends would add to the illusion

by seeming to recede.

If you don't quite trust your grasp of painting with flowers, or are reluctant to blow your whole gardening allowance at once, proceed one combination at a time. In *Garden-Making* (1926), Elsa Rehman describes how she designed one small garden to sport a more complex palette each year. She began with an elegant combination of white, blue, and yellow flowers. The next year she added maroon snapdragons and cherry-colored dahlias. The beds became livelier the next year with yellow marigolds and orange calendulas, zinnias, and dahlias. Finally, she made them all more showy with complementary waves of blue ageratum, salvia, and larkspur.

"That is the real joy of a garden," Rehman writes. "Every year promises a new venture, leading you from

the simplest of experiences into the color wealth of flowers."

Nina Koziol is a garden designer based in Palos Park, Illinois.



Bright colors "pop" from the pale background of the white alyssum and blue forget-me-not, both favorites with early 20thcentury garden writers.

Hue's Hue

Just as an artist moves paint from palette to canvas, the gardener's art lies in creating a colorful arrangement of flowers and foliage that harmonize and complement one another.

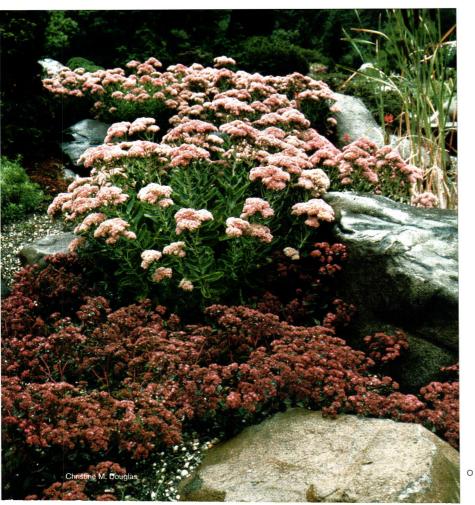
For a dramatic visual impact, combine complementary colors—those on the opposite sides of a color wheel. Examples are yellow and violet, red and green, blue and orange. Placed next to each other, complementary colors appear more vibrant than when standing alone.

Harmonious colors are adjacent on a color wheel. Examples are green and blue, yellow and white, red and orange. A garden designed as a single color, such as a blue border, might have many harmonious shades of blue, blue-green, and violet or purple.

The well-dressed garden border features eyecatching combinations with continuous but varying displays of color throughout the growing season. Subtle differences in the weather from year to year, however, mean that perennials won't always bloom at the same time. Hone your gardening skills by recording bloom times in a journal, so that you mix and match more elegant groupings.

Select a dominant hue for summer that will fit with both spring and fall color schemes. If you're uncertain whether certain color combinations look good together, try using white flowers or silver foliage to take the edge off.

Near your house, use plants that enhance it's color. You may not agree with Gertrude Jekyll that magenta is "maligant," but a rosy rose next to orange-red brick can be nauseating at best. -N.K.



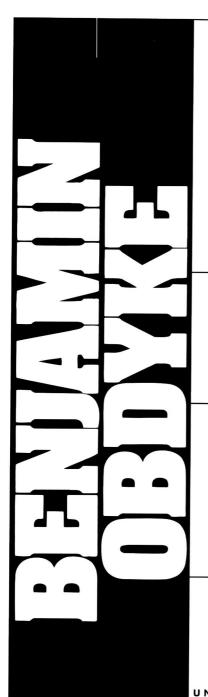
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REPRO NOUVEAU

Discovered at a yard sale by oldhouse buffs in a suburb of Boston, these designs created by Jenny B. Jones between 1905 and 1910 have been reproduced as wallpaper by the J. R. Burrows Company. Shown here is Florentine, based on delicate Renaissance arabesques that were popular in late 19th- and early 20th-century interior design. This version has a hint of Art Nouveau in the spring of its curves. The pattern is 21" wide with a self-match repeat of 21". Six rolls cover 30 square feet. Hand painted in New England, the paper comes in metallic gold on Thebes blue, or a medium green on cream. Custom coloring is available. A single roll costs \$47. For information call (800) 347-1795 or visit www.burrows.com Circle no. 1 on the resource card.



GLASS GLOBES

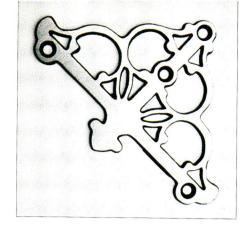
The 1900s built-in cabinets in your old house may have sported clear and frosted decorative glass knobs at one time. Add a colorful spin to this classic design with Architectural Products by Outwater's traditional pulls in myriad rainbow shades. Glass knob pulls range from \$7 to \$13 each. For more information call (800) 835-4400 or visit their Web site at www.outwater.com. Circle no. 2 on the resource card.

IT'S IN THE DETAILS

Does the door of your Prairie-influenced house make you think "bum-galow"? The Simpson Door Company's new Craftsman Collection of doors was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's signature geometric stylings. Available art glass patterns include wheat stalks with blue detailing and squares and rectangles offset with amber elements, framed by either black or silver cames. The doors are available in Douglas fir

or Western hemlock with one to three panels, each with one- to three-light options. If you want to pull out all the stops, you can order matching transoms and sidelights. Shown here is Solano II, which in the size (3' wide) and glazing options shown, sells for about \$650. Contact Simpson at (800) 952-4057, or visit www.simpsondoor.com. Circle no. 3 on the resource card.



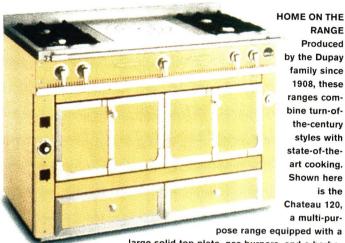


WHAT A BRACKET!

RANGE

is the

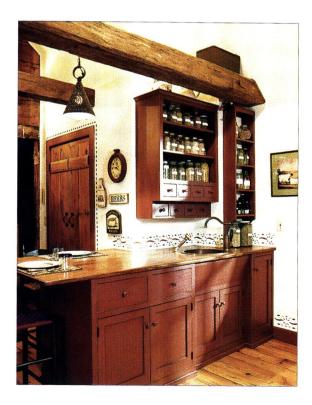
You've ordered a custom-designed screen door, replete with scrolls and fans and filigree. Now give it the appropriate finishing touch with this Victorian screen door hardware by Lee Valley. These decorative corner braces and brackets are cast steel and measure 4 3/4" per side. You'll need to supply five flat-head screws for each. The center rail brackets are 5 1/4" high and 3 7/8" wide and require eight screws in all. A set of four corner braces costs \$9.75 and a pair of center rail brackets costs \$5.75. For more information call (800) 267-8755 or visit www.leevalley.com. Circle no. 4 on the resource card.



large solid top plate, gas burners, and a barbecue grill. Its base has two storage drawers, which can serve as plate warmers when the oven is in use. If you don't fancy yellow you can choose from 15 other colors or even add a hand-painted floral motif. The price is \$19,500. For more information call Kuche & Cucina (201) 261-5221 or visit www.lacornue.com. Circle no. 5 on the resource card.

I'VE GOT MILK PAINT!

Built-in cabinets weren't widely available until the 1920s, but milk paint is an ancient brew. The Egyptians dabbed it on this and that, and you had to make your own into the 19th century. Crownpoint Cabinetry, which uses traditional construction techniques to create period-style custom cabinets, has expanded its available colors of milk paint finishes to 16, including the barn red shown here on its Early American-style cabinets. Pricing varies depending on your kitchen design. For more information call (800) 999-4994 or visit www.crownpoint.com. Circle no. 6 on the resource card.



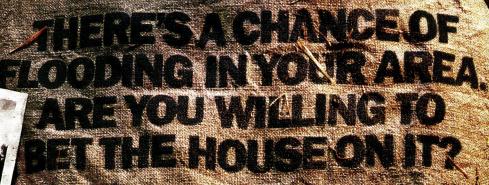


ALONE ATLAS!

Atlas was a Titan (remember the Titans?) who got in big trouble for participating in a revolt against the Olympian gods. He was sentenced henceforth to hold up the earth with his head and hands. When you feel that the weight of the world is on your shoulders, try a romantic evening in the glow of a Legendary Lighting gaslight. The new Atlas series features Legendary's signature Vestal flame (we know you remember the Vestal Virgins) that burns in the traditional "batwing" shape. Made of 16- and 20-ounce copper by Mississippi craftsman Bill Shook, the Atlas models come in post, wall, or ceiling mounts, in heights of 12", 14", and 18". They're designed to burn continuously behind double-strength glass and can be purchased with an optional wind guard. Prices range from \$474 to \$800. Contact Legendary Lighting at (800) 350-5361, or visit www.legendarylighting.com. Circle no. 7 on the resource card.







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Circle no. 502

New technologies can help in documenting and diagnosing building conditions.

High Tech for Old Houses

by Jerry Laiserin, FAIA

he cold glare of a computer screen seems incompatible with the warmth that most folks associate with a fine old house. Yet recent advances in computers and related technologies are providing savvy homeowners and their architects with many new options for documenting and investigating historic buildings.

With the help of these high-tech tools, you can identify existing dimensions, locate hidden problems, and assess material conditions faster, more economically, and with greater accuracy.

While the cost and complexity of most of these new gadgets and software makes them unsuitable for direct use by homeowners, knowing what's available is useful for deciding when to turn to specialists for help. There are two main categories of high tech for old houses: measurement and documentation, and inspection and testing. Here's a quick guide to the primary options.

Measuring & Documenting

An accurate set of architectural drawings of the existing conditions is an essential tool for organizing any building project, but such drawings may not exist for older structures. Measuring and drawing by hand is time-consuming and error prone for all but the smallest and simplest houses. Preservation architects, such as Michael J. Mills, FAIA, of Princeton-based Ford Farewell Mills and Gatsch Architects and Eric Rekdahl, AIA,

with Architectural Resource Group of San Francisco, rely on computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) software. They find the accuracy of CADD and its ability to superimpose different layers and levels in the computer ideal for working with older structures. Such professionals increasingly turn

to photographic techniques or laser scanning as fast and accurate ways to input building measurements into their CADD software.

In photographic measurement, or photogrammetry, a CADD operator applies a few known measurements as references or monument points to a series of multiple overlapping photographs taken from different angles. Special software, such as PhotoModeler Pro from Eos Systems, then derives accurate 3-D CADD models from the photos. The 3-D model can be further processed by most CADD software into conventional 2-D drawings of both interiors and exteriors.

Laser scanning, from companies like Quantapoint, uses safe, low-powered lasers to scan the outside or inside of any building in much the same way that medical CAT scanners analyze the human body. The resulting highly accurate data is fed from the laser to a computer as a "point cloud," or collection of dots in space, that can be converted into CADD models and drawings. Laser scanning is especially useful for cap-



Photos courtesy of PhotoModeler Pro



PhotoModeler Pro created accurate, high quality 3D models (above) and measurements from a photograph of this historic house (top).



5M Johns Manville

Circle no. 498

turing dimensionally accurate images of complex details as well as overall layout and dimensions. Because laser scanners are expensive and require specially trained operators, architects usually farm out the work to outfits like Quantapoint or one of its subcontractors.

Inspecting & Testing

Photos, lasers, and CADD can measure and depict everything you can see, but many of the thorniest problems in working with older buildings are due to things you can't see. What construction is behind that plaster? How solid is the mortar behind a brick façade? The key to these questions is to strike a balance between removing

enough material, albeit of historic value, to be certain of the underlying conditions, versus disrupting the historic material as little as possible.

Preservation architects need to know more than just dimensions. "They need to see what's underneath, behind, and inside the surface materials," says Kent Diebolt of Vertical Access in Ithaca, New York, who provides physical inspection services for many architects and build-

ing owners. New, computerized technologies for noninvasive testing can reveal this hidden information while minimizing damage to the building material that the architect or owner is attempting to save.

One such tool is impulse radar, which sends nondestructive electromagnetic waves through a wall, floor, or roof and measures varying reflections of those waves to create an image of the internal construction. Like the Doppler radar familiar from TV weather forecasts, the changing frequencies of the reflective waves as displayed on a computer screen reveal how many layers of construction are involved, which materials they con-

sist of, and the thickness of those layers and any spaces between them.

For cavity walls—typically multiple layers or withes of masonry separated by air spaces—investigators sometimes turn to a borescope. The operator inserts this rigid bundle of fiber optics through inconspicuous holes drilled in mortar joints to allow direct visual inspection of the condition of internal layers. Hidden moisture conditions in older masonry and plasterwork can be detected by infrared thermography—which produces artificially colored images with "hot" reds and yellows corresponding to dry patches and "cool" blues and greens revealing damp spots.

With homogeneous materials, such

as metals in roofing applications, ultrasound testing can determine the thickness of the material and identify weak spots. Metal detectors—high-tech versions of the devices that beachcombers use—can "see" metal items like reinforcing rods that are built in to an existing wall.

SUPPLIERS

PHOTOMODELER PRO **PRODUCTS** EOS SYSTEMS INC. 101-1847 West Broadway Vancouver, BC Canada V6JIY6 www.photomodeler.com Circle 16 on the resource card. OLIANTAPOINT **Arbor Professional Centre** 275 Curry Hollow Road Suite M100 Pittsburgh, PA 15236 (412) 653-0100 www.quantapoint.com Circle 17 on the resource card. VERTICAL ACCESS P.O. Box 4135 Ithaca, NY 14852 (607) 257-4049 Circle 18 on the resource card.

A Bird in Hand

Inspectors record their findings on the building drawings to correlate test results with

the actual physical locations. However, wielding a roll of architectural drawings while clambering over a roof is not conducive to accuracy or safety. Technology comes to the rescue here too, with the latest handheld PocketPC computers, such as the Compaq iPaq, capable of displaying CADD drawings and accepting notations via stylus input or the iPaq's built-in voice recorder. This latest innovation helps close the loop of information from measurement to documentation to high-tech inspection.

Architect Jerry Laiserin, FAIA, helps architects understand and use high-tech tools. He can be reached at jerry@laiserin.com.



Some cats weren't meant to be leashed. Especially one that boasts 19.2 Volts of cordless power — like the cordless Tiger Saw from Porter-Cable. Its revolutionary, quick-change blade clamp allows you to make keyless blade changes in seconds. And its counter-balanced design makes cutting smoother, with less vibration. Add an aggressive 1" stroke and variable-speed switch, and you've got a Tiger that will tame just about any job. For more information on the cordless Tiger Saw, visit your Porter-Cable retailer, or call 1-800-487-8665 (519-836-2840 in Canada), for the dealer nearest you.

The Tiger Saw is also available in a handy 19.2 Volt Quad Pack, which includes hammer drill, circular saw, flashlight, two batteries and a charger.

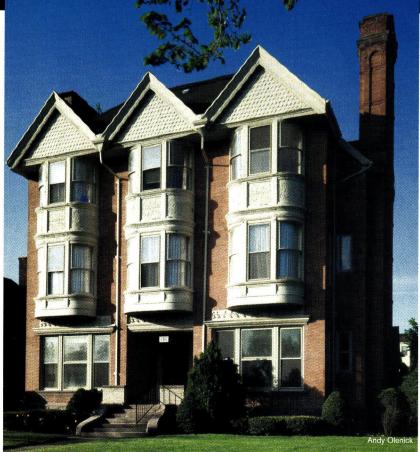
Circle no. 311

PROFESSIONAL POWER TOOLS SINGE 1906



Andy Olenick

Above: Grace Episcopal Church in Scottsville, near Rochester, is one of the best extant examples of an Ellis design. Note how the powerful, three-dimensional form of the entrance porch helps define the welcoming character of the building, while under the cross the "candle-snuffer" roofusually a stand-alone Victorian noveltyvisually links the window below to the transept bay on the right.



Left: This 1883 house, built for a founder of the Rochester Park System, is one of two Ellis structures in an area called Ellis East Estates. Though the building has been greatly altered over the years, the identical triple bays are still striking.

Harvey Ellis, Accursed Genius

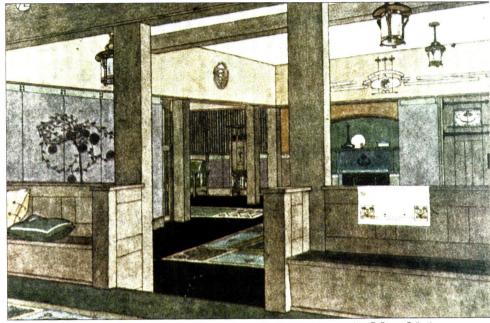
A gifted architect, artist, and designer, Harvey Ellis brought touches of genius to every endeavor in his short, chaotic life.

by Jean R. France

ad Harvey Ellis never existed, surely some writer would have invented him. What a novel his life would make, this romantic figure of great talent disregarded in his own time. He was an architect of lasting influence, an artist whose renderings brought buildings vividly to life, a designer whose sophistication gave the Arts & Crafts movement added elegance. Yet today Harvey Ellis is remembered chiefly for transforming Gustav Stickley's magazine *The Craftsman*, his other achievements forgotten.

During his lifetime, however, colleagues acknowledged Ellis as a master, even a genius. Fellow architect Claude Bragdon said Ellis would have enjoyed the respect he deserved had he not been cursed by an evil fairy. Another architect, more direct, explained that any firm could win a big competition by simply finding Ellis, sobering him up until he finished a design, then paying him off and pointing him at the nearest saloon.

Our sympathetic novelist would need to look more thoroughly at Ellis's long career. Though the 19th century was particularly rough on alcoholics, Ellis managed considerable achievements in spite of that handicap. From the beginning of his career in 1879, Ellis produced designs that stand as textbook examples of the way an architect of genius could handle various styles, from Queen Anne through Richardsonian Romanesque to Arts & Crafts. He was a quick study, absorbing sketches in architectural periodicals as a basis for his own designs and evocative renderings.



Jean R. France Collection

Jean R. France Collection

Above: The Music Room of "An Urban House," designed in 1903 when Ellis was working for Gustav Stickley at *The Craftsman*. Ellis designed several such prototype "Craftsman Houses" for the magazine, down to lamps and table mats. Left: A portrait of Ellis from about 1885.



Courtesy Mabel Tainter Theater

Above: The Mabel Tainter Theater in Menomonie, Wisconsin, is a well-preserved example of a smaller-scale Ellis building. Its interior is rich in colorful Moorish ornament and stained glass.

Below: Minneapolis architect Leroy Buffington, who tried to patent the skyscraper, floated his schemes on enticing drawings by Ellis, such as this 28-storey tower. Below right: A section of a library and conservatory designed for Joseph T. Cunningham in 1900.

Jean R. France Collection

His checkered life leaves gaps in the record, but his early architectural career was relatively stable as partner with his brother Charles in his birthplace of Rochester, New York. Charles was the business manager; Harvey the designer. From 1879 to 1895 the brothers built houses, churches, and commercial buildingsall the stuff of a regular urban practice. Their most outstanding commission was the federal building in Rochester, a Richardsonian structure now City Hall. The firm

made the original plans and supervised the first construction, but the contract was terminated when Charles was put on trial for attempting to bribe his way to another commission.

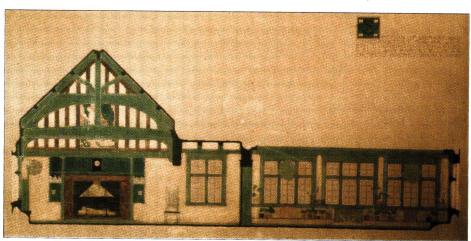
That was in 1885 and may have been the reason Harvey left Rochester. Dated paintings prove that he was in France that year, but by 1886 he had moved to the Midwest. His skill as a designer brought him work at various firms in Minneapolis and St. Louis; his record as an alcoholic meant that he got no credit for it. "His progress from place to place," Bragdon said later, "could be traced by the altered character of the work produced by the architects who employed him."

Most of the renderings that show his hand belonged to the office of Leroy Buffington, a Minneapolis architect famous in history as "the man who tried to patent the skyscraper." Every student knows that Buffington was not the first to devise a system for multi-storey buildings, but he tried hard to profit from the claim. He distributed details of his patent to a wide audience, then sued anyone who used them. The publicity was illustrated with an image of a 28-storey Richardsonian tower, designed by Harvey Ellis.

A Dazzling Draftsman

No client ever built that skyscraper. Nor did Buffington win the competition for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, or for a gigantic tent proposed to hold the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. While many of Ellis's designs for Buffington were built and still stand, it seems possible that his seductive renderings were used as a sales tool that was not always successful. After all, what did it cost? According to one contemporary, Buffington paid Ellis only whatever was in his pocket at the end of the day.

One unbuilt design for Buffington seems to have had a lasting impact. In 1891 Ellis designed a small jewel-box bank re-



Strong Museum, Rochester, New York



Left: This jewel-box bank from 1891 was said to hang in the office of Louis Sullivan and may have influenced some of his own small bank designs. Below left: "The Hour Glass," an 1898 watercolor. By then, six years before his death, Ellis had given up drinking and converted to Catholicism.



produced in an architectural periodical. That picture reportedly was pinned up in the office of Chicago's Louis Sullivan, father of the skyscraper and, later, architect of a famous series of small banks.

In 1894 Ellis gave up alcohol, moved back to Rochester, and became a full-time artist. There is an evocative description of Ellis in his studio "paint[ing] cryptic, unsalable pictures under a still north light, with plenty of time and plenty of cigarettes." He taught at a local craft school, designed books and posters and ads, and worked on a few architectural commissions, most of them never built.

He continued his practice of studying periodicals for new ideas. That must be how he discovered the Arts & Crafts movement. His 1900 project for a library and conservatory for Joseph T. Cunningham demonstrates clearly the influence of the British school of innovative architects. In 1903 his skill at Arts & Crafts design brought an offer from Gustav Stickley to move to Syracuse to edit *The Craftsman*. It was a remarkable opportunity, giving Ellis

the chance to join the Arts & Crafts crusade for a complete aesthetic environment. Stickley, of course, was interested in selling furniture. Almost overnight, Ellis expanded the product line, adding inlays derived from Charles Rennie Mack-

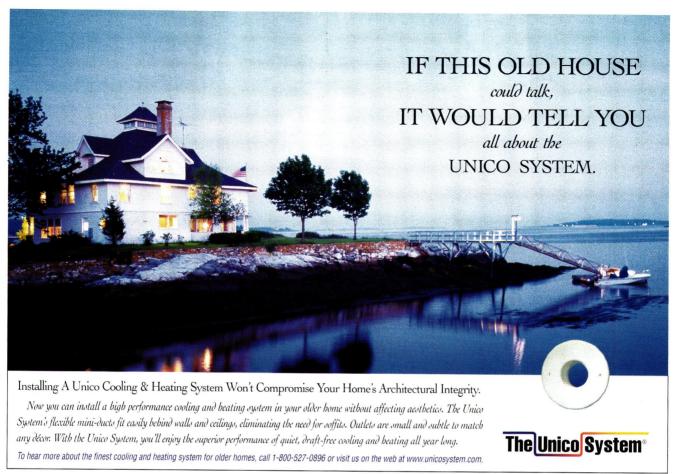
intosh, but he also presented the furniture in ideal settings by designing complete houses. He created wall friezes and embroidery patterns, gave advice on color, and contributed architectural philosophy.

Ellis had found the ideal job, but his tenure was short. He died in January 1904, after only seven months with the magazine, and was buried in an unmarked grave in a Syracuse cemetery.

There is a happy ending, of a sort. His sad story is more endearing than appalling to current admirers, amused at the stigma his alcoholism generated. A recent effort by devoted fans has furnished the grave with a marker: Harvey Ellis, 1852-1904, Architect. At the dedication ceremony, a priest said a prayer, the surviving Ellis family member placed flowers, and a young man stepped out of the crowd with a special tribute: wood shavings from the Stickley factory, where they are still making Harvey Ellis furniture.

Jean R. France is an art historian with the University of Rochester.





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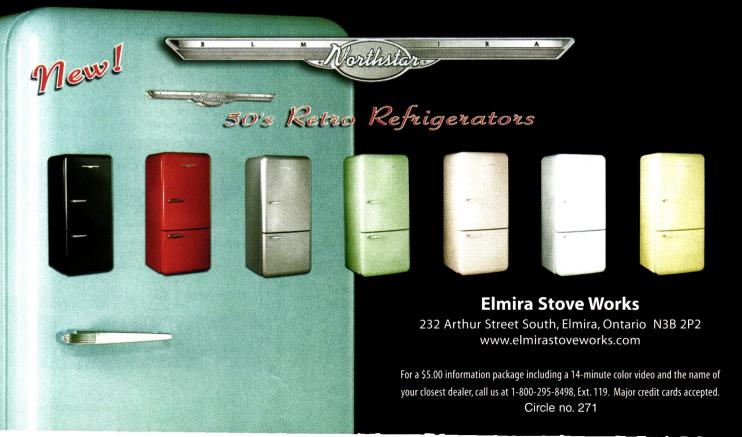


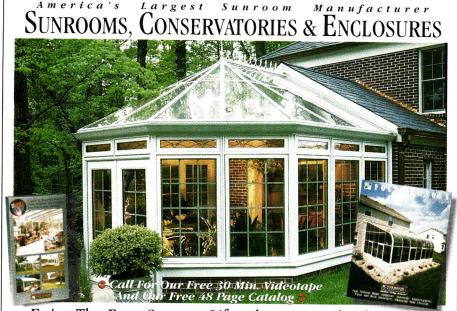
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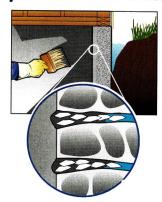
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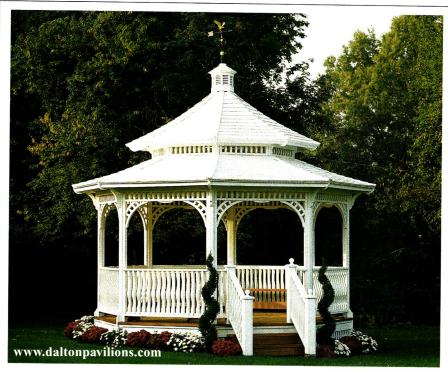
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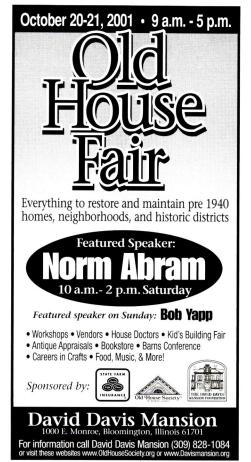
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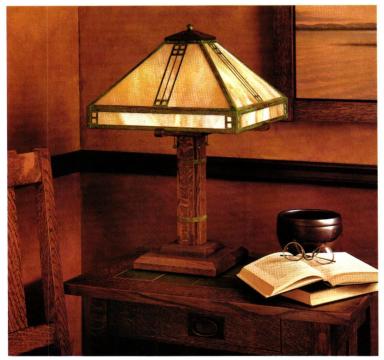


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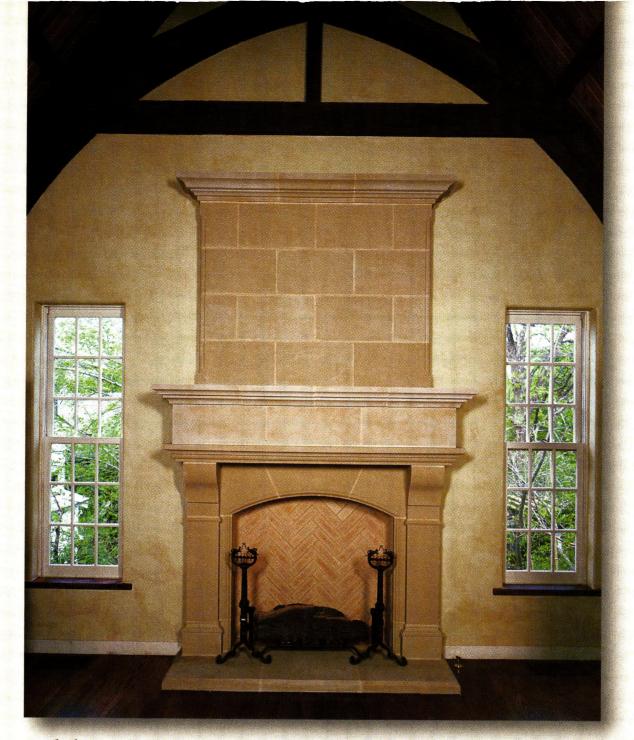
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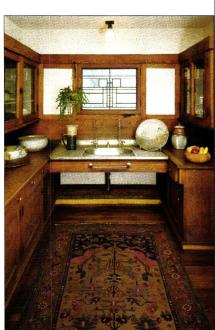
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A tour of seven period kitchens that embody ideas ahead of their time, and present historic design details worth copying today.

-page 46



September/October 2001

Advanced decorative wall finishes can be tricky, but the basic repertoire of techniques is straightforward to master and can be successfully employed in a wide variety of settings.

-page 54



At the turn of the 20th century, there quietly surfaced a new and delightfully democratic house destined to surpass all others in popularity—the Foursquare.

-page 66



Andy Olenick

Above: When Frank Lloyd Wright designed a house for industrialist Edward E. Boynton in 1908, the architect's ideal of integrating beauty and functionality throughout the building, as well as his reputed sensitivity to servants, produced a kitchen that is still large, well thoughtout, and uncommonly attractive almost a century after it was built.



Kitchens of the Future Past

by the OHJ staff

Looking at Breakthrough Historic Details with an Eye Towards Today

veryone restoring a working kitchen in their old house faces the same quandary. How can you be sensitive to the house's age or design era while still incorporating the practical features necessary to prepare meals for today's lifestyle? Vexing as the question is, it's comforting to know that cooks and house builders have been experimenting with ways to make kitchens more useful, more healthful, and more efficient for over 200 years. Even in days when matches were a luxury item or cast iron was high tech, these designers faced culinary problems that are still with us. More important, they came up with solutions—some so effective they've been used ever since, and others so innovative they're still pushing the envelope. Here we'll take a quick tour of seven period kitchens-either remarkably preserved or flawlessly restored—that embody ideas ahead of their time, and present historic design details and practical features worth copying today.

Rundlet-May House (1807) Portsmouth, New Hampshire

One of history's earliest kitchen revolutionaries was Count Rumford, better known in his native America as Benjamin Thompson. A British loyalist as well as a physicist, he fled to England in 1776 and spent much of his

life in Bavaria pioneering the sciences of ballistics and thermodynamics.

Rumford's enclosed fireplace, which evolved into the stewing range, is considered a forerunner of the modern kitchen stove. It was designed to use heat more efficiently by cooking the food rather than the cook, and to offer an alternative to boiling food, which Rumford suspected was less nourishing as well as less savory.

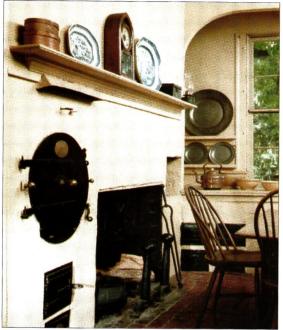
This brick enclosure had a separate firebox for each boiler, to reduce the amount

Courtesy of SPNEA/David Bohl



Above: To the left of the open hearth in the Rundlet-May House sits an original Rumford roaster. At the right is one version of his brick enclosed cooking range, which worked with specially designed pots.

Below: The hand-wrought iron doors and hardware of the cooking fireplace are highlighted as original historic focal points in the Rundlet-May House. Right: The Gallier House in New Orleans, built in 1857, showcased the latest in modern technology, including this copper hot water heater.



Courtesy of SPNEA/David Bohl

of heat needed to prepare a small meal. A hood drew smoke and steam into the chimney. Some of these were semicircular, so the cook could work from the center of a horseshoe arrangement. An even more obvious forerunner of the modern range was Rumford's register stove, a rectangular brick structure with a cast-iron plate on top. Two registers, shaped almost exactly like those of today's ranges, allowed cooks to control the heat reaching their pans.

Next to the scientifically designed fireplace that bears his name, Rumford's best known device was the Rumford roaster—that cylinder in the brick wall at the left in the photo above. The cook, by manipulating a steam tube on top, could control moisture; two blowpipes in the bottom allowed browning. Designed in 1800, it was so advanced for its time that only a few hundred people ever dared try one.

Practical as Rumford's inventions were, they were surpassed for actual cooking by cast-iron stoves in the 1820s, yet these remarkable 18th-century features still





find a purpose in the Rundlet-May House. The waist-high top of the former range (left of window) is now incorporated into a long shelf-counter for the display of pewter. Rather than being downplayed or removed, the hand-wrought iron doors and hardware of the cooking fireplace are highlighted as original historic focal points in the overall scheme of the room.

Gallier House (1857) New Orleans, Louisiana

When architect James Gallier opened the Charles Hotel in New Orleans in 1837, it was among the first in the country with bathing facilities. Twenty years later when his architect-son James Jr. began building a house, he also incorporated the most upto-date technology available.

Gallier stored rainwater from the roof in a 5,000-gallon cypress cistern in the backyard—one with a hollow core that also served as a primitive refrigerator. His castiron stove, sized to fit inside the fireplace, was another cutting-edge feature. Water

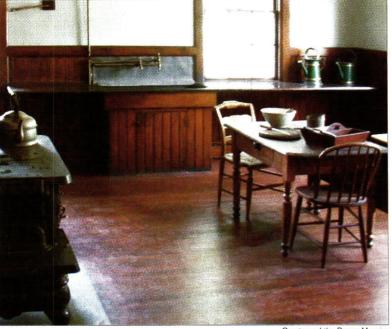
was heated in a reservoir behind the stove, circulated to the top of the boiler (the copper tank to the right of the fireplace) through a copper coil, and then stored until needed for the kitchen sink or the bath on the second floor. However, the water was only hot when the range was fired up.

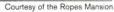
Unlike Rumford, Gallier didn't invent these early appliances, but instead took advantage of what the market offered to upscale consumers of the time. (About a decade earlier, author Washington Irving had a similar boiler and cast-iron stove in Sunnyside, his Tarrytown, New York, estate.) However, Gallier's kitchen exhibits site-built details that are just as forward-thinking. Off the rear entrance a cypress icebox was sited in a vestibule, which made it less convenient for the cook but distanced it from the hot stove and closer to the iceman.

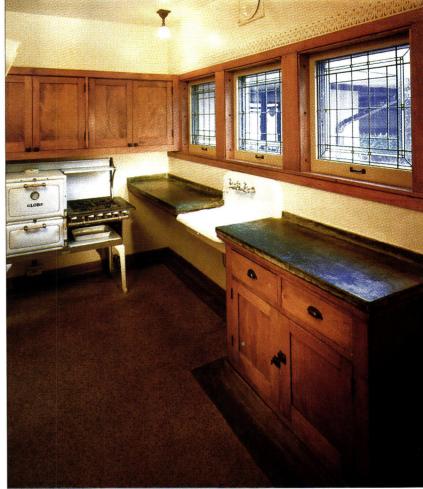
Ropes Mansion (1727) Salem, Massachusetts

When the Ropes sisters decided to remodel the kitchen in their family's 1727

Below: The Ropes Mansion in Salem, Massachusetts, was built in 1727, but the kitchen was updated in 1893 by the Ropes sisters. The room is arranged to be space-saving and efficient. Right: Architect William Purcell built this house for his family. The kitchen, both practical and beautiful, was part of Purcell's plan to make the house a laboratory of innovative materials and ideas.







Christian Korab

Georgian-style mansion, they incorporated principles for cooking and household efficiency that were state-of-the-art in 1893. Sarah Ropes in particular was well-versed in 19th-century domestic economy and noted as a great housekeeper. Although rudimentary by today's standards, the kitchen was innovative for a pre-20th century kitchen, and it has remained remarkably undisturbed over the following century.

Configured to save space, all the amenities in the kitchen line the walls, including the Stack Company coal-burning stove, a copper water heater, and a sink with hot and cold running water.

Outside the kitchen, a separate pantry with plenty of shelving was reserved for storing the sisters' extensive collection of cooking utensils and dry goods. Saving space wasn't the only goal; the sisters also valued the kitchen's time-saving layout. The appliances and the central worktable are positioned in such a way that it takes a mere three and a half steps to go from one area to another.

The counter surface around the sink was highly innovative too. Made of one piece of solid pine, it fits seamlessly against the wall with a face that is sanded and varnished to create a smooth work surface. At a time when most sinks were freestanding, the cast-iron sink was dropped into the counter so that liquids drained into it. A rustproof tin backsplash sits flush with the sink so it won't catch debris. Surface mounted copper pipes carry hot and cold water from a basement cistern. Beadboard cabinetwork with catches of tarnish-resistant nickel enclose the space under the sink both to hide drainpipes and provide storage.

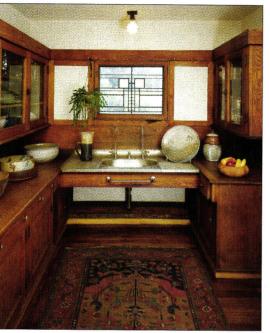
Purcell-Cutts House (1913) Minneapolis, Minnesota

Despite the charm that shiny copper boilers and filigreed cook stoves hold for us now, appearance was rarely a consideration for kitchens before the 20th century. Families that could afford modern kitchens could also afford servants, who often toiled in the basement or separate buildings. While

architect William Purcell and his wife, Edna, planned to employ one servant in their Prairie-style house, the progressive Purcell intended the kitchen to be both practical and as beautiful as other rooms in the 1913 house.

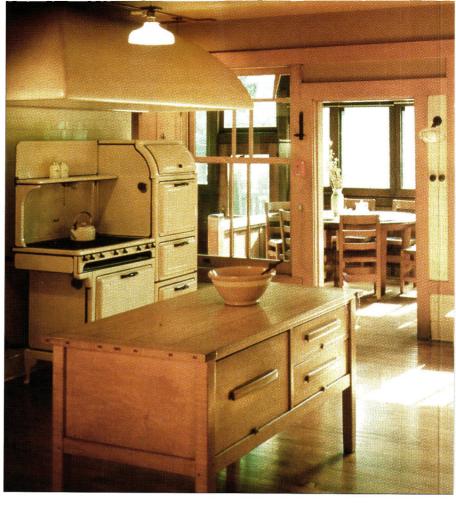
The birch cabinets, stained to look like expensive cherry, "actually have a richness not seen in other parts of the house," says Purcell-Cutts curator Jennifer Olivarez. Three art-glass windows above the sink and counter looked out at Lakes of the Isles while providing copious natural light over the sink and extensive counter. The speckled, brick red floors, as well as the green grey countertops, are magnesite, a virtually indestructible compound of magnesium, sawdust, and pigment. Seamless and easily formed into coves at corners, it was easy to clean and therefore hygienic.

The opposite wall is floor-to-ceiling doors and drawers so that cooking utensils could be hidden, with numerous pull out cutting boards, a white glass pastry counter, and access to the laundry chute. On either



Left: The butler's pantry at the Boynton House kitchen features a wooden counter and backsplash plus copious cabinets for storage.

Right: Drawers in the Gamble House worktable can be opened from either side. Note the unique window muntin patterns.



Andy Olenick

side of a pocket door between the kitchen and dining room was a button on the floor. The maid, burdened with a pot roast or steaming tureen of soup, could open the door and close it with her foot before serving. The goal then was to hide the sights and smells of the kitchen, where today we entertain our guests and help the kids with homework. Such a gadget could still be a boon, though, when struggling in the front door with armloads of groceries.

Boynton House (1908) Rochester, New York

When the industrialist and widower Edward E. Boynton commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to design a house for himself, his teenage daughter, and two or three live-in servants, the self-styled masterbuilder clearly invested extra time on the kitchen and dining areas. Even in the pre-income tax age of relative luxury and cheap labor, the Boynton House kitchen (see page 46) was generous both in size and attention to details although it was only one part of a

servants' complex that would include bedand bathrooms, a pantry, and a porch.

Like William Purcell, Wright chose to flank the Boynton sink with an extensive wood counter (now protected by laminate). Ample light comes from a trio of art-glass windows similar to those in the rest of the house, but built of gumwood rather than more expensive oak. Behind the counters runs a high wood backsplash that connects the stools of the windows as, in effect, a continuous wainscot. This feature and the flat moulding that encircles the room to form the window headers play up Prairie-style horizontality. Floors are hard maple, naturally finished, as are the pine cabinets—honest, functional, and durable. The deep sink is metal, as is a shallower version in the butler's pantry.

While the overhead pot rack is a later addition (currently being removed in the restoration of this still-private residence) the hefty island-table is original and the centerpiece of the kitchen. Besides providing a hub work surface between the

sink, counters, glass-fronted refrigerator (to the left on page 46), and stove (to the right just out of view in that photograph), it is amply equipped with flat-panel drawers of many sizes. More large, single drawers and single-door cabinets support the counters against the wall.

Gamble House (1908) Pasadena, California

When the brothers Greene designed the renowned "ultimate bungalow" for David Berry Gamble and his family, their legendary attention to detail, design unity, and mechanical ingenuity carried beyond the living and public rooms into the kitchen. Modest in size when compared to those in country and summer houses of the day, the space is also uncommonly aesthetic and inviting—so much so it could easily be a kitchen of our time.

As with the Boynton House, the Gamble House kitchen is part of a larger servants' complex designed to continue the decorative motifs of the main house—this



Below: Kitchens of the 1930s were a mecca of mass production and easy-to-clean surfaces.



Timothy Street Porter

Courtesy of the Ford Museum

time, even more pointedly creating a pleasing work place of its own. Immense sash windows connect the kitchen proper to the servants' dining area—a porch with large screened and glazed windows (background in the photo on page 50). They also bring southern light into the kitchen and echo elements in the main rooms with their remarkable muntin patterns. Built-in cabinets, doors, windows, and trim are constructed of naturally finished maple, often with bird's-eye figuring. Upper, built-in cabinets are detailed with pegged joints; vertical elements that extend above or below the case are carefully rounded over.

Again like the Boynton House, a broad worktable resembling a modern kitchen island holds center stage. Built of maple and detailed like fine furniture, it is a famous example of Greene & Greene integration of beauty and utility. Not only can the splined table top be accessed from all four sides, but the brothers also designed the drawers with pulls on each end so they could be opened from either side

of the table. Equally space-saving are the dish-cupboard doors that slide on tracks, rather than swinging on hinges.

Ford Museum (1933) Dearborn, Michigan

By the 1930s the kitchen had evolved from a center of food and meal production to an arena of preparation and consumption, introducing processed food and equipment brand names that would populate houses for decades to come. With improved technologies, standardized kitchen appliances, and more concern about hygiene than ever before, the kitchen came to resemble a scientist's laboratory more than a symbolic heart of the home.

The mock-up above of a 1933 kitchen at the Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, displays many of the new materials and products that made kitchens easier to maintain than ever. Smooth, shining, man-made surfaces—particularly porcelain enamel, rust-resisting metals (nickel, Monel, and eventually chromium), and

linoleum—advanced the ideal microbeproof household that would improve health while combatting diseases such as polio. This Hoosier cabinet, table, and relatively cool and compact gas range all have porcelain-enamel counters and surfaces for easy cleaning. Appliances are on legs not only for aesthetic purposes but to deny germs a hiding place. White, cream, and mint green were the dominating colors.

Now run by the lady of the house rather than servants, kitchens also required the latest in labor-saving technology to meet the roster of daily tasks. Common electrical conveniences of the day included a General Electric monitor-top refrigerator, an Everyday Electric Company toaster, and an electric iron—resting on the built-in ironing board. As mass-produced consumer products from dishwashers to detergents began to proliferate, regional differences in kitchens disappeared to the point that it became hard to tell a kitchen in Peoria, Illinois, from one in Seattle, Washington.

Steps to Creating Post-Victorian Wall Finishes



o your walls need more pizzazz than a monochrome coat of paint can give them? Are they drab, yet not enough to warrant the expense and rigmarole of hanging wallpaper? For centuries, homeowners have turned to decorative wall finishes—glazes, washes, and creative dabbles of paint—to jazz up, mellow out, harmonize, or unify interior surfaces. Now, after 50 years of near obscurity, these age-honored techniques are back big time, making them as fashionable as they are historically appropriate for old houses.

Wall finishes are techniques worth perfecting for your design-solution arsenal because they are easily manipulated to produce the effect you desire. A warm umber glaze over harsh or monolithic colors creates a subdued glow. Light-colored glaze over a dark color perks up a room. Two or more blended colors can unify a room by integrating the colors of carpeting, upholstery, or curtains. Wall finishes are excelent transitions between rooms of diverse colors or contrasting styles. Not only do they provide textural and dimensional qualities impossible to obtain with an ordinary painted surface, but they can hide a mul-

Glaze

titude of blemishes, bulges, and bugaboos on your old plaster walls.

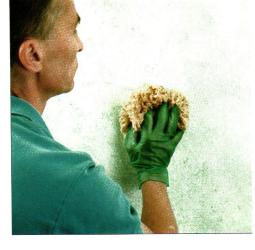
Advanced decorative wall finishes can be tricky to learn, but the basic repertoire of techniques is straightforward to master and can be successfully employed in a wide va-

riety of settings. The new water-based glazes developed over the last decade have made the effects even more accessible and user friendly (while adding the cachet of proprietary names such as Ralph Lauren). All of the following techniques require 1) a base color and 2) one or more topcoats or glazes.

The Basic One-Two

The materials you need are not exotic—in fact, household objects create some of the most interesting effects—but they do vary with each finish. You can create wall finishes with either paint or glazes (oil-based or waterbased). Whether decorating walls, doors, dados, or trim, select the first coat (base coat) carefully because this coat will show through the later glaze, and the final finish partly depends on this color. My choice for the base is satin or semi-gloss latex enamel. You want to be able to slide your finish coat around on top of it. Avoid flat paint (too absorbent), and glossy paint (the finish slides *too* much).

Apply the base coat just like a standard, high-quality, single-color finish, covering the old color as smoothly as possible. Despite label directions, most water-based enamels need thinning to level out like oil-based enamels. I add Floetrol brand conditioner and a little water. Between coats, and after your final base coat, wet sand dust specks, runs, or rough areas with 320-grit wet-or-dry sandpaper. Your final base coat should dry at least 24 hours—longer if cold weather or excessive humidity retards drying. It's best to let the paint cure three days before applying your glaze.





Top: Sponging on is one of the easiest glazing techniques, called additive or positive, because you only apply glaze without removing part of it later. Above: Sponging off, like other subtractive or negative techniques, is best done by two people. The finished effect tends to be more subtle than that of sponging on. Opposite: Sponging several colors while they're still wet produces what decorators of the 1920s and '30s called a jazz finish.



Above: Dragging can create dramatic striations on a wall. As with any glazing technique it's crucial not to lose the "wet edge," where unworked glaze-seen here as bright blue-hasn't yet dried. You may need to glaze alternate sections over two days.

Wall finishes are mixtures of thin paints or, more often, semi-transparent glazes. To obtain a particular color glaze, you can ask your paint store to tint a container of glazing liquid or mix it yourself using approximately one part glazing liquid to five parts paint. Or you can choose a pre-colored glaze from one of the convenient proprietary systems. The trick is to create a glaze that, when manipulated, will allow some of the base coat to show through.

Always test your glazes before beginning on your walls. Try them on large scraps of cardboard, wallboard, or Masonite, both to determine if the colors you've chosen look good on large areas and to develop or improve your technique. When it's time to begin, start on the least conspicuous wall; your technique might improve as you move along. Start in the upper left hand corner if you're right-handed, the upper right hand corner if you're left-handed.

Dragging

The most basic and perhaps most prevalent wall finish used in the last 120 years is a simple brush glaze—often referred to as wall dragging or striè. Dragging creates a subtle textural finish but is not as easy to produce as it looks. Especially when working on a long, uninterrupted wall, the most efficient way to drag is with two people: one neatly applying the base coat, followed by a second manipulating the glaze from ceiling to floor. This is even truer with the new fast-drying glazes. You can buy a special dragging brush, or just use a wide paintbrush or a wallpaper smoothing brush.

As a guide, use a hard lead pencil and plumb bob or carpenter's level to draw vertical lines around the room, 2′ to 3′ apart. Apply the glaze coat between each pair of lines with a short-nap (1/4″ thick) roller, hot dog roller, or a wide brush, moving ahead of the person doing the dragging. The trick is to develop a machinelike rhythm, never losing your wet edge as you proceed.



Left: You can buy special brushes for dragging or stippling, but paint, wallpaper, and even shoe brushes can be recruited. Graining tools or rubber squeegees cut into teeth will create bolder stripes. A sea sponge (bottom left) makes more random patterns than a manufactured sponge, but for ragging, the wideranging choice of tools includes old T-shirts and crumpled plastic.

BETWEEN OIL AND WATER

've never accepted new products and techniques readily. Do it the old fashioned way and the results are reliable. Thus, I've ardently clung to oil-based paints, varnishes, and glazes. These smelly, toxic, hard-to-clean-up materials made my living for years, and I'm almost sentimental about them, but finally, I've had to give in. Environmental regulation has forced paint manufacturers to alter the old formulas with undesirable results, and many old-line products are slowly disappearing.

Old-time decorative painters used many traditional formulas and were secretive about the ingredients. Now we can purchase oil-based glazing liquid, using it directly from the can or thinning it with mineral spirits. Or, as with water-based glazes, you can tint your own glaze with your favorite oil-based paint or artists' tube colors. So kicking and screaming, I've gradually accepted modern water-based paints. Some will never please me, some are just okay, but some are better than the old-fashioned alternative.

However, there is still at least one argument in favor of oil-based glaze—namely, its long open time. It can be adulterated with linseed oil or kerosene to dry even more slowly. This means that you can glaze a large area and if you don't like it, wipe it all off or renew the glaze with a rag dampened in mineral spirits. The drawbacks are obvious: that same slow drying time (usually overnight), the strong odor, and the messy cleanup.

Dragging top to bottom, take care to feather out any heavy buildup of glaze where the wall meets the ceiling and baseboard. If at all possible, finish each vertical brush width with one ceiling-to-floor swoop.

If keeping the wet edge is a problem, add a small amount of Floetrol to the glaze or lightly mist the glaze with water. Another solution is to mask the wall into vertical sections and carefully glaze every other section one day, then the remaining sections the next, removing any overlaps with a rag. If you begin to lose your wet edge, mist it with water or pat it with a damp sponge.

As you move around the room, your brush will load up with excess glaze, creating streaks or a darker finish than you want. To avoid this, keep handy identical spare brushes or clean cotton rags for wiping off excess material as you work. Use these pauses to inspect your work from a distance.

A variation of a simple brush glaze is sometimes called a linen finish because of the pattern it leaves. After you apply vertical glaze, use the same tools to brush horizontally before the glaze sets up. Or you can apply a second finish of the same glaze the next day, applying and removing it horizontally.

You can create bolder stripes by combing—dragging with a rubber graining tool, steel graining combs wrapped in cloth, or homemade tools made by cutting "teeth" into an autobody compounding rubber or rubber squeegee. Pull the tool top to bottom, following your pencil guidelines and cleaning your tool after each swipe. To create a checked pattern, pull your tool horizontally across the vertical lines you just made in the wet glaze. This is best done on small areas or by dividing the room off in sections and decorating every other section the following day.







You can rag on or off with an old cloth that has been wadded or twisted. Top: Wad the rag by letting it fall loosely into your hand so it looks like a cabbage. Middle: Ragging on, using a cloth twisted like a rope, can be combined with other approaches. Above: Ragging off requires the glazer to pounce and dab the glaze. You'll get a smoother look than with ragging on, and can even achieve a leatherlike texture.

FLAT GOES FANCY

harlie Pieper doesn't agree with those who prefer a semi-gloss for a glaze base coat. She also thinks that major paint manufacturers offer too many glaze color choices for the average old-house owner. So she developed her own line of solid and semi-transparent colors—an even dozen of each—that she calls the Craftsman Palette.

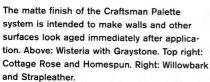
"The look that I wanted to achieve was of a wall that had aged beautifully and softened with time," the Studio City, California, colorist says. "Glazing applied at the turn of the century would have broken down and calcified to a flatter look, and a lime wash would have had virtually no sheen."

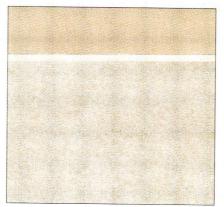
Pieper did considerable research before choosing her hues, although she admits that not all of them would have been found as solid wall colors a century ago. "Our 'Wisteria' is a good example. If you look at William Morris papers, though, you'll see that the color itself was appropriate for the period, and it has been well accepted." Pieper says she worked hard to come up with a product that would be "almost bullet proof" for kitchens and bathrooms, and demonstrates at workshops that her glazes can be cleaned with a dish scrubber. The glazes are designed to be applied with a sponge and like other new glazing products, clean up with water.

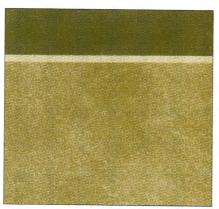
Now she's developed a wood-grain glaze for those people who have stripped off their old woodwork only to find homely paint-grade lumber rather than priceless cherry.

Pieper's base colors are available in gallons, for \$34.95, and her glazes come in quarts for \$19.95, plus shipping and handling. For more information call her business, Faux Pourri, at (818) 766-6384.









Stippling

For the subtlest of all finishes, try stippling. Used alone or as the basis for many other finishes, it is an excellent way to add interest with color. As with other techniques, large areas are best stippled by two people. To begin, you'll need a stippling brush (I've seen them for more than \$100 or as little as \$8), stain brush, or possibly a shoe shine brush that doesn't shed bristles. The bigger the brush the more area you can cover quickly. Sparingly roll your glazing liquid over the base coat in an area approximately 2' square, then pounce the glaze with your brush. Your force will affect the appearance; you'll have to decide how much pressure to use. Take care to create an even pattern, and avoid working in straight vertical or horizontal lines. To maintain your wet edge, leave a few inches of unstippled glaze on the opposite side of your starting place so you can apply more glaze without ruining the area just worked.

Sponging and Ragging

These are related finishes created with two different glazing tools, each in one of two ways. Using a sponge or rag, you can either apply the glaze (often called sponging on, or ragging on), or remove portions of it (sponging off or ragging off) or apply the glaze directly with the sponge or rag. (See pages 53 and 55) First, prepare your walls the same as for dragging. For sponging, obtain a natural sea sponge; man-made sponges make repetitious imprints. For sponging off, dampen the sponge slightly with water; for sponging on, dip your sponge sparingly into the glaze from a roller pan. The trick is to pounce the wall, frequently turning the sponge to create a surface that is evenly applied, yet distinctively mottled. Take care to sponge neatly into corners, around trim, and next to your masked ceiling. If you desire, when the first sponge coat dries, you can sponge the walls again for a more subdued finish—or rev up the finish with a second or third glaze color.

Ragging is similar to sponging except that the tool is a wadded or twisted cotton rag. To rag off, follow these directions with a damp rag, after first applying the glaze as you would for the other techniques.

For wadded ragging on, saturate your cloth with water, squeeze and wring it as dry as possible, fully immerse it into the glazing mixture, then dab or squeeze out most of the excess glaze. Next, form the rag by holding it on one end and letting it drop into your other hand in a wad that looks like a head of cabbage. As with sponging, pat, pounce, and dab the wall to get the effect you want.

For twisted ragging on, take a damp cotton rag and twist it tightly until it has a ropelike appearance. Roll the rag in a pan of glaze, again squeezing out excess. Then, using both hands, roll the cloth in all directions across the base coat. Twisted ragging can be combined with other methods; ragging off can create a realistic leather texture.

You can sponge or rag two or three colors either after each color dries or wet-on-wet; each produces a different effect. Wet-on-wet leaves what was called a "jazz" finish in the 1920s and '30s; it's also called a polychrome finish. It takes some practice, since if you overwork your colors they'll mix and look muddy.

Color washing

Color washing is a subtle finish useful on both smooth and textured walls. With the base coat prepared, mix a very thin glaze of glazing liquid and paint. (You can also use paint thinned with lots of water). Next apply the glaze with a brush or short-nap roller, then wipe most of it off using a rag, sponge, or dry brush. Textured walls are especially easy to work on because you simply highlight the texture with the leftover glaze. Smooth walls are harder because your technique must be consistent (or consistently inconsistent) to prevent an

unevenly mottled surface. It's up to you how much color to remove or leave on the wall, and you can also leave faint highlights of brush strokes, swirls, or other patterns.

Clear finishes

Most wall finishes are durable enough to use alone without a protective finish. However, if you use them in hallways or other high traffic areas, consider applying a clear protective finish. Some glazing liquid manufacturers make special clear finishes, but you can also use a low-sheen water-based varnish. Avoid oil-based varnishes and polyurethanes. Their tendency to yellow can drastically alter the color of your finish months or even weeks after you have finished.

Once you have mastered these basic techniques, the beauty—and fun—of classic wall finishes comes in varying the materials and methods for different effects. Try twisting your sponges or stippling brush as you pounce, or switching from rags to crumpled bread wrappers. You'll be surprised and pleased at the results.

Special thanks to Bill Farley owner of Faux Creations in Rochester, New York, for demonstrating the techniques shown here.

SUPPLIERS

Sherwin-Williams www.sherwin.com Circle no. 22 on the resource card. McCloskey Valspar Corporation Wheeling, IL 60090 (800) 345-4530 Circle no. 23 on the resource card. 7insser 173 Belmont Drive, Somerset, NJ 08875 (732) 469-8100 www.zinsser.com Circle no. 24 on the resource card. LIGI /ZAR P.O. Box 70, Scranton, PA 18501 (800) 272-3235 Circle no. 25 on the resource card. Ralph Lauren www.paintplus.com Circle no. 26 on the resource card. The Flood Company (Floetrol) P.O. Box 2535, Hudson, OH 44236 (800) 321-3444 www.floodco.com Circle no. 27 on the resource card.





Top: Color washing, especially good for textured walls, imparts a soft, aged look. You can remove the glaze with a rag, sponge, or brush. Always experiment first.

Above: For stippling, a subtractive technique, use the largest brush possible and attack the glaze with a light pouncing motion, rotating your wrist.

Photos by the Lords



Plaster crack repair is a valuable skill for any old-house owner. and the tools are minimal and simple. Left: A sponge is useful for clean-up. Right: Beginners will find a settingtype compound easier to apply than plaster. The authors use a 6" joint-compound knife for the important infill step.





t's rare to see older plaster without any cracks, and there are those of us who find cracks part of plaster's aesthetic character and charm. Make no mistake, though: Cracking can be serious and lead to further plaster damage if not taken care of.

Cracks occur for a variety of reasons, many of which are simply the natural reactions of plaster compounds and building materials. Climate and temperature changes, buildings settling and moving over time, weight loads, chimney movement, and environmental stresses (heavy traffic, nearby trains, construction blasting) all

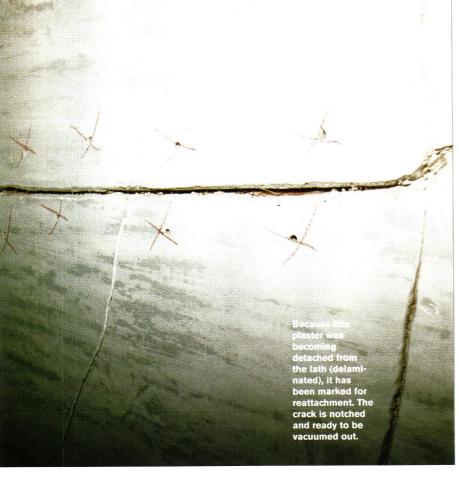
contribute to plaster cracking. Cracking is further exacerbated by any structural disturbances or building repairs (foundation or sill work), leaving a building unheated during the winter, or deteriorating framing and timber (rotting sills, weak floors and joists, insufficient framing).

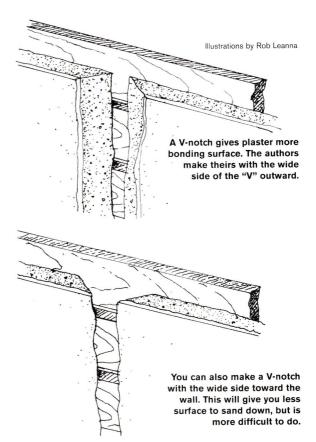
One or more of these conditions affect most older buildings, so it's a good idea for their caretakers to learn some basics of plaster repair. Crack repair is a good place to start and will provide a foundation for other damage control, such as patching and skimming. If you do it correctly, you'll have long-lasting or even permanent results. If you use a quick fix such as spackling, taping, and/or repainting, the crack is likely to come back. We sometimes use fiberglass tape for hairline cracks, but it requires multiple layers of patching material to cover and camouflage it. So unless we'll be skimming the entire surface we prefer a dig-out and infill method.

For a sound repair to any crack, you must stop the plaster on each side from moving or shifting, and the substrate material (wood or rock lath) must be solid and secure with no bouncing. Push gently on the plaster on each side of a crack to test for movement. If it gives, or has de-

Old-house walls often fail through no fault of their own.

epairing





laminated 1/8" or more from its substrate, you'll need to make additional repairs such as reattachment. If the substrate is weak, some sort of stabilization is necessary. Assuming that you have a crack in stable plaster, we find this method very successful.

First remove the plaster from the crack by digging it out down to the wood or other substrate material with a sharp utility knife. Have lots of extra blades on hand for this. Following the crack, create a V-notch by removing the plaster along both sides of the crack, cutting at an angle until you see the substrate. You want to open up the V-notch so that it is approx-

imately 1/4" to 1/2" wide at the opening and as narrow as possible next to the substrate material. This angle will give your infill material maximum bonding surface without sacrificing too much plaster around the crack. You will also be minimizing the amount of debris that you might push into the lath and behind the plaster, causing more damage. If the plaster around this area is delaminated, you can complete any reattachment at this point.

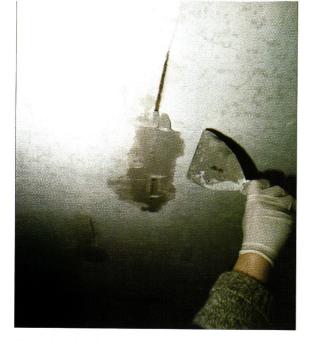
Next, vacuum out the crack, then carefully remove additional debris and dust with a small hand broom or paintbrush. Use a spray bottle and damp sponge to

clean the dust off the plaster and prepare the surfaces for infilling with 1) a settingtype compound such as Durabond or 2) plaster such as gauging or plaster-of-Paris.

Durabond is a setting joint compound with plasterlike qualities, a built-in bonding agent, and a range of available setting rates—45 or 90 minutes are most common. Durabond also comes in sandable or nonsandable versions. Nonsandable dries harder and slightly stronger, and we usually use it for the first coat. If you're less experienced you may want to use sandable Durabond throughout so you can sand away any excess. When you're ready to in-

Plaster Cracks

by Peter and Noelle Lord



Above: Applying the first coat of compound from both sides to push it well into and under the crack. Right: Applying the second and third coats, the knife is held almost on end to scrape off excess.





fill the crack, get your spray bottle again and thoroughly wet the V-notch, both inside and 3" on each side. This damp surface will let you remove buildup from your infill products.

You should mix Durabond to peanut-butter consistency. Push it into the crack perpendicularly from each side so that you are "smooshing" it under the plaster, achieving a little reattachment in the process. We use a 6" joint-compound knife for this. After each infill application, hold your knife almost perpendicular to the plaster surface and pull it along the notch to scrape off excess filler and leave the filler flush with the surface. The filler will shrink as it sets up, requiring two or three coats. We normally use sandable Durabond for the final coat so we can provide a final touchup with a 150-grit sandpaper block.

If you're more of a purist and prefer to use "real" plaster to fix your cracks, you should follow the same digging, vacuuming, and washing process to prepare for filling. Be aware that plaster sets up much more quickly than Durabond, is very difficult to sand, and requires a little more skill in application. Also, when the crack is ready for infill, you will need to brush on a bonding agent because plaster won't stick on its own. We prefer acrylic bonding agents, available from plaster supply houses and many concrete-product suppliers (USGS, Weld-O-Bond from Sil-

pro, Plaster- and Concrete-Weld from Larson's). Many are colored, letting you clearly see where you have painted them on.

A bonding agent works by providing a consistent surface for a new compound to adhere to. When wet, it bonds with the plaster and holds it onto the adjoining surface. It does not need to be fully dry before you apply the plaster. If it does dry, it will remain active for up to a week, but don't push your

luck—it can get wet only once.

You want to mix plaster to a thick-yogurt consistency. You'll get the proper ratio if you put cold, clean water in a small container and add plaster to it until the water disappears. (A container roughly one-third of water will mix up to a container full of plaster.) Once you're done stirring, you have about 15 minutes to work with

plaster-of-Paris, up to 30 minutes for gauging plaster. As with Durabond, fill the crack by coming at it perpendicularly from each side to push the plaster into and under the crack. Scrape the excess off the surrounding area but leave it proud, or slightly bulged, on the surface. Use a damp sponge to wipe any excess plaster off the surface surrounding the crack. As the plaster turns rubbery, spray it down slightly and begin to work it again,

SUPPLIERS

USGS CORPORATION 125 S. Franklin St. Chicago, IL 60606 (800) 874-4968; www.usg.com plaster supplies and products, Durabond Circle 28 on resource card. SILPRO CORPORATION 2 New England Way Ayer, MA 01432-1514 (800) 343-1501 www.silpro.com bonding agent Circle 29 on resource card. LARSEN PRODUCTS CORP. 8244 Preston Court Jessup, MD 20794 (800) 633-6668 www.larsenproducts.com Weld-Crete/Plaster-Weld bonding agent Circle 30 on resource card.



Sandable Durabond eases the final touchup, even over plaster. A Tyvek suit and charcoal mask are musts when sanding old buildings.

scraping off excess fill (it will have a creamy consistency) and pushing it further into the crack, or into other areas where the infill is dipping slightly. It's important to keep it damp enough to prevent drying out before it sets up. If plaster doesn't have enough moisture to fully set up, it will lack strength and integrity. You can tell when the plaster is drying because it will change from grey to white.

If you finish filling the crack and it dents in slightly, you can go back and perfect the repair with a coat of sandable Durabond. To properly prepare repaired surfaces for repainting, we use a one-to-three vinegar and water rinse to restore the surface pH. At this point your plaster is ready for priming and painting.

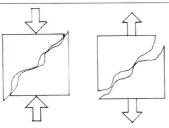
Peter and Noelle operate Peter Lord Plaster & Paint, Inc. specializing in the preservation and restoration of historic surfaces, and all plaster systems (151 Mast Road, Westbrook, ME 04092; 207-854-5156; www.plasterlord.com).

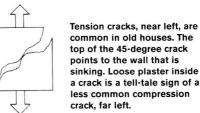
Playing Crack Detective

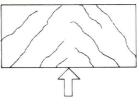
racks can be wonderful communicators, literally "pointing" to what is going on with a building. They may indicate a high or low spot—in other words, where the building is settling to or being heaved up from. Horizontal cracks usually happen at the "birth" of the plaster: As the wood lath shrinks and moves in a consistent way throughout the setting-up phase, plaster cracks along the lath lines. Unless the plaster is clearly loose and floppy, you can assume horizontal cracks are stable and leave them alone.

Large vertical cracks and any diagonal cracks (shear cracks) tell us the building is moving. The most common diagonal crack is a tension crack, which shows that one part of the building is sinking while another is staying in place. The top of the crack points toward the wall that has dropped from its original position. Less common is a compression crack, caused when one part of a building pushes down on another. You'll recognize it by crushed plaster along the line of the crack. The bottom of a compression crack points to the sinking wall.

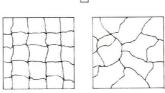
Two crack patterns that signal plaster problems but not structural damage are alligatoring and map cracking. The former is a grid of cracks caused by plaster failure along the lines of studs and lath—a fairly normal symptom of aging that calls for the plaster to be replaced before it gets pulled off by its own weight. Map cracking, a more haphazard pattern, sometimes means the finish coat is coming loose from the base coats. Map cracking around a water leak will look puffy. You'll need to correct the leak and check for rot in lath and any surrounding wood before you replaster.







Shear cracks form patterns that you can read like clues to a puzzle. This "teepee" of compression cracks indicates outside walls that are sinking while an interior column or bearing wall stays in place.



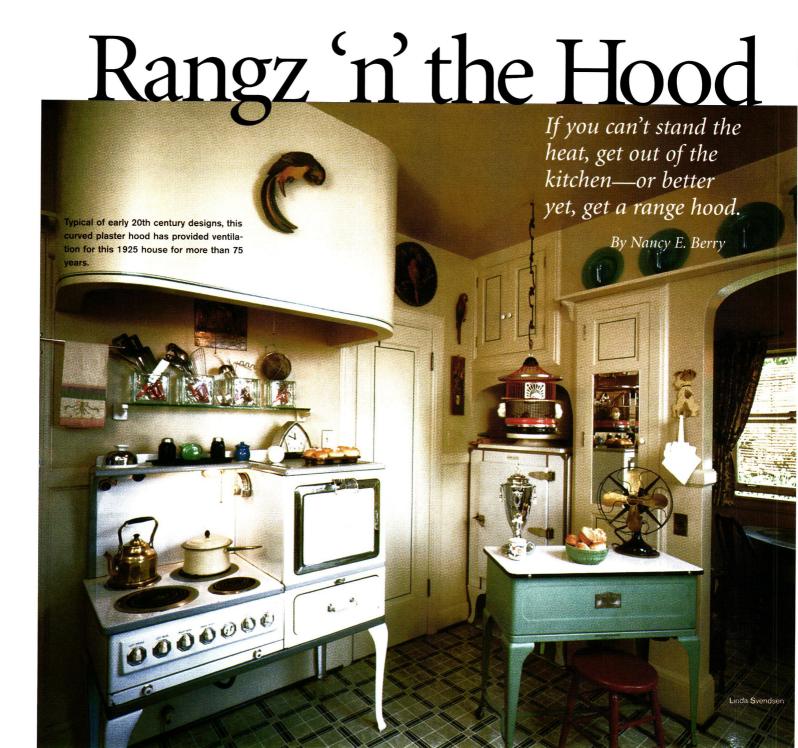
Alligatoring, far left, is a sign merely of aging plaster that needs to be replaced. Map cracking, left, indicates a finish layer pulling away from base layers, sometimes caused by water damage.

he golden age of wood- and coal-burning stoves gave rise to not only colorful expressions, but a novel feature that changed the way people cooked and kitchens looked. In the late 19th century, concern for better health led to research in domestic science, which in turn made sweeping improvements in America's kitchens. Experts advised that a properly ventilated cook space was essential, and the range hood became an integral element of kitchen design.

Two of the earliest critics, Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, had breakthrough ideas

about keeping kitchen air fresh. In American Woman's Home (1869) they recommended that kitchens be located on the first floor and include an area with a separate stove room. "Readers should install glazed sliding doors between the two rooms to allow for light as well as to serve to shut out heat and smells from the kitchen," they advised. Doors and windows were fine, but by the turn of the 20th century, the real innovation in kitchen ventilation was the hood.

In 1901 Arts & Crafts guru Gustav Stickley wrote in his magazine *The Craftsman* that kitchens should be centers for hospitality and good cheer, and that the



well-ventilated kitchen should be one large room. He suggested, "The hooded range should be devised that all odors of cooking be carried off and the arrangement and ventilation should be such that this is one of the best aired and sunniest of all rooms in the house."

Before electric motors were widely available to power active systems, most ventilation systems were passive, and range hoods had to operate like chimneys and flues. Once cooking commenced, the cook opened a round metal door in the wall under the hood and latched it to one side so that convection would take the rising hot air

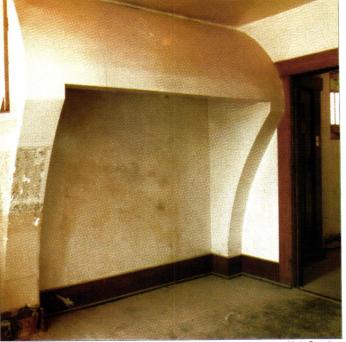
through pipes and let it escape through the exterior wall.

These early hoods were often massive canopies made of thick plaster (over lath and 2 x 4s) or metal usually cast iron or occasionally copper or brass. Because of their often dominating size, kitchen range hoods needed to be suspended by heavy chains mounted in ceiling beams. These early models came in a variety of shapes-

barrel, cone, or pyramid—to catch and dispel hot air from the room. Cast-iron hoods would be painted to match the kitchen wall color or black to match the range. Occasionally the hood's interior would be decorated with glazed white tiles.

With the introduction of gas stoves in the late 1890s, the problems of smoke and heat were reduced somewhat, but cooking odors were still an issue. When electricity became more common in the 1920s, passive hoods were gradually replaced by fan-assisted ventilation that could draw more smoke up and away from the kitchen quarters.

Today, there are a few companies that make



Linda Svends

hoods appropriate for period kitchens-and with modern technology they easily remove and filter out fumes. The type of hood you choose will depend on the age and style of your kitchen. If you are fortunate enough to come across an old kitchen with its original range hood intact, you can retrofit it with a fan. In fact, most building codes and manufacturers require proper kitchen ventilation. Your cooking equipment size and heat output dictates the requirements of your vent fan or blower. The Home Ventilating Institute rec-

ommends calculating the square footage of your

kitchen space and multiplying this number by two. This math will give you the cubic feet per minute (CFM) that your fan or blower should draw. Commercial-grade ranges—popular for many of today's kitchens, contemporary and period-inspired alike—require a higher CFM as well as a remote ventilator. Abbaka, a company that makes custom range hoods, recommends that the hood's bottom opening should completely cover the cooking surface and overlap by 3", adding 6" to the length of your cook top.

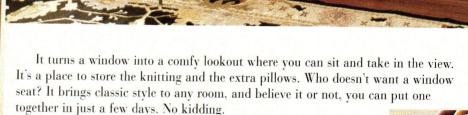
Left: No detail was left to chance in houses designed by the architectural team Greene & Greene. They designed this range hood for the kitchen of the Robinson House built in 1907. Below: Abbaka custom designed this reproduction cylindrical hood from one piece of metal for Carolands, a 1915 Beaux-Arts mansion in California.

SUPPLIERS

Ahhaka 1500-A Burke Avenue San Francisco, CA 94124 (415) 648-7210 www.abbaka.com Circle no. 12 on the resource card. **Broan-Nutone LLC** P.O. Box 140 Hartford, WI 53025 (800) 558-1711 www.broan.com Circle no. 13 on the resource card. Independent Inc. (800) 7- NEVADA www.independent@kitchenhood.com Circle no. 14 on the resource card. Viking Range Corp. 111 Front St. Greenwood, MI 38930 (888) Viking 1 www.vikingrange.com Circle no. 15 on the resource card.

Best Seat In This Four-Square House

A simple built-in with a storage bonus



To be sure, making a window seat usually requires many hours of painstaking craftsmanship, but there is another way that's simpler, quicker and less expensive: creating one out of unfinished

furniture. The window seat shown here started as three main pieces—a blanket chest and two bookcases—but it ended up

looking like it was custom-made. Putting the pieces together takes some figuring and fitting. The chest should be slightly wider than the window, including the trim, while the bookcases can be more or less the same width as the chest, depending on the available wall space. To give this trio a custom look

and tie the pieces together, you may want some decorative molding and trim plus a couple of boards to run between the tops of the bookcases. You may also need to make a platform to raise the three units to the right window sill and ceiling heights.

All the wood can be pre-finished before the pieces are assembled. In this case, it got two coats of Minwax® Polyshades® Natural Cherry Gloss, a one-step stain and polyurethane finish that gave the wood the classic look of library paneling in half the time needed for separate staining and topcoating. After that, stock the shelves with a year's worth of books and some of your favorite things, and enjoy the view.



Nature Made It.



Minwax® Makes It Beautiful.



Wood adds natural warmth and beauty to your home. Especially when it's finished with Minwax. From warm, rich wood stains to protective, clear finishes, Minwax offers a complete line of easy-to-use, quality wood

finishing products. Trust Minwax to make and keep all your wood beautiful for years to come.





James C. Massey From the ornamental concrete block foundation that grows into a porch, to the pyramidal roof with its pilot-houselike dormer, this pristine Foursquare embodies all the basic features that gave "The most house for the least money" wide appeal as the new breed of dwelling fit for a young century. 2105 OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL . SEPTEMBER 1 OCTOBER 2001



The American Foursquare

 $(1890-1935)^{by}$

by Gordon Bock

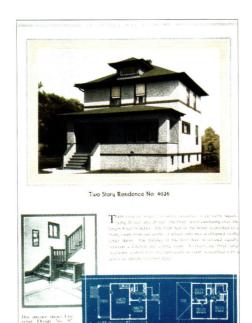
mid the rumble of historical styles and early modern ideas that vied to dominate residential construction at the turn of the 20th century, there quietly surfaced a new and delightfully democratic house destined to surpass all others in popularity. Flying under the architectural radar of the day, the Foursquare landed suddenly and simultaneously across the continent in the late 1890s. Like mushrooms after damp weather, it found surprisingly fertile ground in towns large and small, for everyone, for the same reasons. So ubiquitous was this everyman's dwelling that it didn't have a widely accepted name until the 1980s, some half-century after its heyday. How could any house be so universal and yet so unrecognized for so long? A look at the mercurial nature of the familiar Foursquare helps explain why.

What is a Foursquare?

As befits an uncomplicated and efficient house, the defining characteristics of a Foursquare are straightforward and few. The basic Foursquare is two storeys encompassed by only four walls of equal dimensions—that is, a square. Each floor is divided into four rooms, invariably a living room, dining room, kitchen, and entrance hall on the first floor, three bedrooms and a bath on the second floor. Foursquares are also capped by an equilateral hipped roof and, in most versions, one or more hipped dormers that expand the attic into considerable living and storage space. Beyond this, the classic Foursquare presents

a full-width front porch to the road, usually the only elevation open for embellishment on its typically narrow lot.

Other normal details of a style (window types, exterior cladding and ornament) generally fall outside the Foursquare formula—not because they do not appear on these buildings, but because they all have been used at one time or another. The point is that the Foursquare is actually a house type—like the saltbox or bungalow—to which the trappings of any number of styles or idioms can be applied. Put differently, Foursquares are the architectural equivalent of couturier's live mannequin—that is, a basic body that can be dressed in whatever ensemble of covering meets the designer's fancy.



This house published in Architectural Economy (1920) is typical of the widely circulated plans and plates that enabled builders to propagate **Foursquares** across the continent. Note the Prairie feel enhanced by the stucco cladding and the "shirtwaist" belt course connecting the window

Courtesy of Daniel D. Reiff



Counterclockwise from left: Foursquares often stretched to three-bays wide with a central door as in this Madison, N.J., example with Colonial Revival porch columns and pediment. In Fredonia, N.Y., exposed rafter tails and battered porch piers hint at Arts & Crafts detailing, This Wichita, Kansas, house pushes the Foursquare definition with its eclectic mix of gable roof and bungaloid porch treatment. More Victorian is the mix of eave modillions and metal roof ornaments on this Strasburg, Virginia, Foursquare.



ames C. Massey

Foursquare Flavors

Part of the Foursquare's success lies in the fact that it could be easily recast in different guises without too much tampering with the basic equation. Mixing and matching common building components and carpentry flourishes, for example, would give a homeowner the following menu of houses:

Victorian Multiple siding materials—typically clapboards on

the first storey, decorative wood shingles on the second—were all that was needed to give a Foursquare a late-19th century feel. A flared belt course at the second-storey line, a roof that kicked up at the eaves, and picturesque windows (with lattice or Queen Anne upper sashes) enhanced the effect.

Colonial Revival Here the recipe required applying classical features to a uniformly cladded house (often with white or ochre-colored clapboards). Porches are supported by Greco-Roman columns, sometimes with pilasters on the walls and at building corners. A cornice, frequently with dentils, runs under the eaves. Expensive houses might sport a Colonial Revival-



Daniel D. Rei

style railing on the porch roof, a Palladian window in the dormer, or a decorative cameo window on a side wall.

Prairie Foursquares in the Midwest regularly emphasize horizontality via materials and effects popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright and his colleagues. Roof pitches are low with deep eaves; dormers are less common. Exterior cladding is monolithic (often stucco) with no corner details, but a pronounced belt course connecting upperstorey window sills. Windows, often casement, are paired or ganged to make them visually wider. Porch supports are square and often masonry.

Arts & Crafts/California Craftsman Deploying many details widely seen



Jeff Tully

on bungalows, Arts & Crafts Foursquares have deep, unfinished eaves clearly supported by rafters (though rarely decorated). Porches are held up by battered piers of wood, or squarish stone or brick supports. Walls are naturalistic wood shingles, stucco, brick, or even stone.

Region/Plan-specific In cities and regions where Foursquares became legion, local builders and housing needs often spawned their own variants, such as the Arts & Crafts-detailed breed known as the "PDX" in Portand, Oregon, and the "Classic Box" in Seattle, or the no-frills, central chimney version called the "Cornbelt Cube" in Kansas and Iowa. Several plan and kithouse purveyors put their own stamp on



the Foursquare, notably the Chicago Housewrecking Co. William Radford, Aladdin, and Sears, Roebuck. In the same way, Foursquares were the poster child for firms promoting ornamental concrete block before World War I, and thousands of houses were erected in this rectilinear material.

From Where Foursquares?

Scholars have a hard time pinning down a specific provenance for the Foursquare. Indeed, it seems to have coalesced out of thin air in the late 1890s. Foursquares prove to be all but unheard-of before that date, then fully realized and widely built almost immediately thereafter. Nonetheless the Foursquare's signal features have many

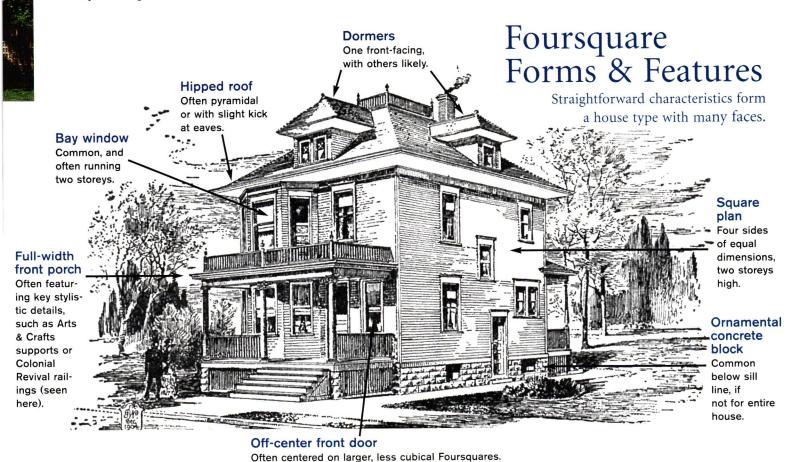
precedents. Hipped-roof houses were popular in the 18th century, particularly in the Georgian style with regular, rectangular plans built in stone or brick. By the heyday of the Italianate style in the 1850s, squarish or cubical houses with low hipped roofs were all the vogue for Tuscan-style villas, as popularized first by A.J. Downing, then others in pioneering plan books.

What happened after the Civil War to suddenly pull together such a simple, but surprisingly new and popular house form is unclear. Architects, certainly, were too focused on complex, often European models—particularly the late Victorian Queen Anne styles—to have found it worth their time. Indeed, the real source of the Foursquare may have been social and technological changes—in particular, new construction methods and materials (balloon-framing, mail-order materials, and later, concrete block), a need for affordable housing, and a waning public interest in the fussy house styles of the late 19th century.

In any event, by the 1890s several

prototypes clearly recognizable as Foursquares appear in mainstream architectural publications. The Grodavent Brothers of Denver published a typical-looking brick Foursquare in *Carpentry and Building* magazine in 1895. House plan magnate Robert W. Shoppell offered a classic design in frame construction in his October 1900 edition of *Shoppell's Modern Houses*. One of the earliest examples (recently identified by Thomas W. Hanchett) is an 1891 house designed by none other than Frank E. Kidder, the prolific construction authority and architect.

By 1915 building catalogs as well as paint manufacturer brochures are full of drawings promoting how to build "A Practical Square Home," "A Square Shingle House," or "A Square Colonial Home." According to one advertisement, "The square house with low roof is probably the most common type of residence building today." It was no exaggeration for a house that would remain the mainstay of the housing industry for another 20 years.



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HOUSE HOW-TO

BASICS



Richard Sexton

By Marylee MacDonald

hen you embark on restoring a room, one of your first challenges is how to carefully remove door and window trim, baseboards, and other woodwork so they can be put back later in their original positions. Perhaps you need to pop off a strategic mould-

ing to run new wiring or recover lost window weights. If you're taking the walls down to bare studs in order to replaster, add plumbing, or insulate, then "taking it all off" may actually save time. Another reason to remove trim is to strip paint in a safe, ventilated space, instead of the rooms you inhabit. Layers of paint come off faster,

and your back feels better, when you place the work across sawhorses.

Take care though. Mouldings split, even when you approach the job methodically, and you won't find identical patterns or woods at the local lumberyard. Here's how we suggest you approach the job of delicate dismantling.

OLD-HOUSE BASICS

WHERE TO START

To free up the woodwork from wallpaper that may be overlapping it or from layers of paint "gluing" it to the wall, put a new blade in your utility knife and score the perimeters of the windows, doors, and baseboards. Cutting through the film of paint does as much to loosen the woodwork as a lot of grunting, so don't skip this step.

Taking mouldings apart is like pressing the rewind button on your VCR. You are reversing the process used to assemble the interior trim from its components. The window and door casings are nailed to the jambs, and additional built-up mouldings may be nailed to the outer edges of the flat casing. Two small pieces can make up what looks like a single profile. Score the joints, and these will be far easier to disassemble.

First, choose an inconspicuous door or window, ascend the ladder, and push the putty knife (or tap the handle lightly with a hammer) until the blade slides between the wall and woodwork. Wiggle the putty knife back and forth. Then, gently hammer the bent end of the pry bar into this opening. Use leverage and work the trim away from the wall until you find a nail. If you find that the force you're exerting is damaging plaster (and you want to save the plaster) slip a wood shingle behind the pry bar.

When you find the first nail, place the notch of the pry bar around that nail and pry until you see a second nail. Use shingles to hold the woodwork away from the wall, or else the trim could snap back into place when you let go, popping the head of the finish nail through the surface of the paint. This is a no-no. (See "Removing Nails" page 74.)

Pry against the second nail with the pry bar, taking care to protect the wall with a putty knife or shingle. There are studs or wood blocks wherever the moulding is nailed, so you will have solid support to pry against. Not so if you're prying between the studs, where there is nothing except lath.

Long nails hold the flat casings around doors and windows to the jambs and rough framing. To remove the casings, you may need to use two pry bars working in opposite directions. Starting with the putty knife, widen the opening by working it back and forth, and then insert one pry bar. Work carefully to avoid chewing up edges. When you have room, insert a second pry bar next to it. You can also use this method to remove the window stops,

LOW-TECH TOOLS

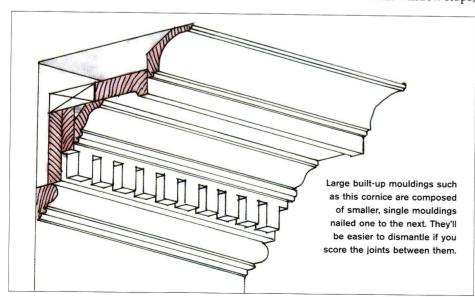
Forget about screwdrivers! They gouge the wood. Even so, dismantling woodwork is a job well within the reach of a beginner. Hand tools are all you'll need. Two 16" pry bars, flat on both ends, are necessities. The other tools include:

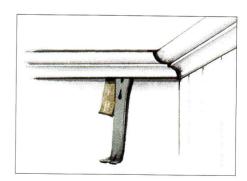
- Two 6" putty knifes
- · Claw hammer
- · Leather work gloves
- · Utility knife with retractable blade
- Hacksaw blade, one end covered in a holder or adhesive tape
- Half a dozen wood shingles
- Nail puller
- · Metal file
- Stepladder
- Twine for bundling trim
- Indelible pen (to mark the original location on the back of trim)

After this small investment, sweat equity will take you the rest of the way.

but watch out. Sometimes window stops are screwed, not nailed. Screws, especially round-head brass screws paired with brass finishing washers, allow homeowners to make seasonal adjustments to sticky or rattling window sashes. Screws are also great in case the sash weights need repair. Over time, though, painters cover the screws.

After the pry bar has sprung the trim at each nail, pull gently with your gloved hands. If the nails are stubborn and the moulding begins to split, rather than muscling





Inside corners are coped, with one piece lapping over the other. Loosen each board until you decide which is on top.

Illustrations by Rob Leanna

OLD-HOUSE BASICS

it with the pry bar, use a hacksaw blade. Slip the blade in the crack between the wall and moulding. Wrap one end of the hacksaw blade in adhesive tape to give you something to grip, then cut the nail and the moulding will come free. You can also use a hacksaw when you're freeing up the moulding at the first nail. Once that nail is severed, the piece will pull away from the wall, and you can see where the next nail is located.

Always work from corners or ends, especially on mouldings that flex. Otherwise, you risk snapping them. An example of this type of moulding is the ogee trim used around windows, cornice mouldings, picture mouldings, and base cap. These fragile pieces require extra care.

MITERS AND COPED MOULDINGS

Take your time with these babies. Not only are the profiles of mouldings hard to duplicate, but the fitting and futzing with corners is time-consuming. Some carpenter spent a long time working on this "kiss fit." Don't mess it up.

Outside corners are the easiest to take apart. Score the paint with the utility knife, insert the putty knife, and loosen until you find the first nail. Then pry gently against the putty knife with a pry bar. Work your way along the trim, nail by nail, until you've

loosened it from one end to the other. Now begin pulling gently where the nails are located. Don't let the trim fall back.

Inside corners are not mitered, they're coped. This means that one board is cut flat and runs all the way into the corner where it's cut at 90 degrees. The other board is cut with a coping saw to fit the profile of the installed moulding. Score the paint in the corner, then try loosening one board and then the other until you decide which is the most likely to come free. The coped piece must be removed first.

You'll often find lap joints in the middle of long runs of cornice or picture rail. These lap joints are located over studs or, in the case of solid masonry walls, grounds—that is, wooden blocks inserted into the brick or plaster as nailing anchors for the joiners who trimmed out the house. The length of these pieces is critical. Each piece of moulding must go back where it came from. So, even if one piece splits when you're removing it, stop immediately and glue it back together. Hold the broken, freshly glued pieces to a splint with clamps. Moulding isn't fine furniture, but there's no denying what a squeeze bottle of hide glue can do for a job-site repair. Hide glue has a long open time, allowing you to position the fragmented ends carefully. Hide glue also leaves none of the thick residue of dried, white or yellow carpenter's glue. Warm water washes hide glue off, unlike the white glue that gums up the pores of wood and really shows up if you apply clear finish.

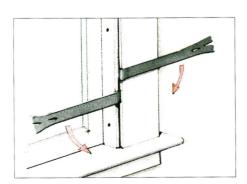
Occasionally baseboards can fool you into thinking they have a separate base cap, when they are really one piece with a milled profile on top. Don't pry too hard until you know for sure. Another component of a baseboard is base shoe, which hides the gap between the baseboard and the floorboards. Score the corners, inside and outside; start from mitered corners, if there are any.

Tall baseboards—the 12" variety—were generally fastened with long nails. These aren't always easy to extract. The base

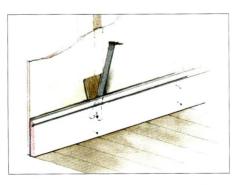
cap may be toenailed down into the base-board and straight-nailed into the wall. Nails in two directions hold woodwork very securely in place. Here's another placewhere the hacksaw blade comes in handy. Slip it in the gap and sever one or more nails.

A tip for windows: Take off every-

In masonry or plaster walls, you'll find grounds, the wooden blocks (at arrows) that provide a place to nail—and pry—the mouldings.



To remove casings around doors or windows, try working two pry bars in opposite directions. Window stops are the only moulding where you might find screws.



Because mouldings are nailed to studs, you'll have a solid surface to pry against.

OLD-HOUSE BASICS

thing except the sill. Sills are tough to remove without splitting them, and of all the trim pieces, they're the easiest to strip in place.

REMOVING NAILS

My dad always gave me the job of driving the nails back through the lumber. Perhaps he thought I would step on them—or maybe he wanted to keep me out of his hair. While that's fine for framing lumber, it's the wrong approach for trim. Trim is installed with finish nails, and the right way to clean up mouldings is to pull the nails from the back. Here's why. After carpenters set nail heads, painters come along and fill the holes with putty. The putty hardens, and if you try to bang the nail out with a hammer, the putty and nailhead erupt through the paint layers, splintering wood. Tiny holes widen to a half-inch, ragged pit.

Pulling finish nails from the back is easy because they have no significant heads. You can do your nail cleanup on the floor or across sawhorses spanned by a sturdy plank. Don't let moulding bend while you're exerting force, and forget the claws of the hammer. A claw hammer is rough on trim,



Photos this page by Gordon Bock

especially softwoods. Nail pullers were invented for this task and are less likely to leave tracks. With leverage, even cut nails pull through easily. If you find a common nail, pull it as far as you can, then try to induce metal fatigue by bending the nail back and forth with locking pliers until the steel grows warm. Snap the nail off flush (even with the back surface of the moulding). If a ragged piece

of metal sticks up, grind it flush with a metal file. Otherwise, when you bundle the trim, you'll risk gouging adjacent pieces.

LABEL AND STORE

It's a good idea to sketch each room and give a number or compass point to every door and window. Come up with a labeling scheme and make a cheat sheet so your helpers also know what they're supposed to mark down. The labeling scheme can be by room—Parlor, Sitting Room, and Master Bedroom. Mouldings, such as cornices and baseboards, are best labeled by compass



SUPPLIERS:

American Tool Co. 92 Grant St. P.O. Box 829 Wilmington, OH 45177-0829 Vice-Grip locking pliers, other tools. Circle 19 on resource card.

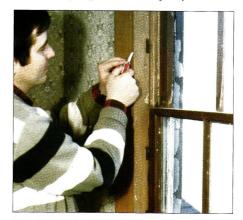
Roughneck Tools 505 South 7th Ave. City of Industry, CA 91746 (626) 336-4999 www.olympiaweb.com Gorilla pry bar, other striking tools. Circle 20 on resource card.

Stanley Tools New Britain, CT 06050 (800) 262-2161 www.stanleyworks.com Wonderbar pry bar, other striking tools. Circle 21 on resource card. coordinates within the room NW, SE. Give each door and window a number—Door 1, Window 1.

Keep an indelible pen handy, but test it first with paint stripper so you know it's truly indelible. If the ink comes off, switch brands or try a woodburning tool. As you take each piece down, mark the location on the back. Don't wait for Pick-Up-Stix to accumulate in the middle of the floor.

Then bundle and label each unit and key it to your cheat sheet. After you've bound a bundle of trim with twine, mark the location on tagboard mailing labels. With baling wire, attach the label through a nail hole in a piece of bundled moulding. That way, even if you take the bundle apart for stripping, you won't lose track of where the moulding came from.

When the time comes to reinstall the package, you can return the bundle to the proper location. Nail holes will line up, and you can even drive your new finish nail through specks of old putty.



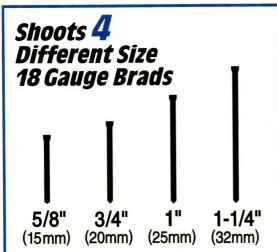
Far left: Use a hacksaw blade to cut hidden or stubborn nails. Large power-hacksaw blades (shown here) make ideal tools. Left: A good way to protect mouldings is to slip your pry bar between two wide-blade putty knives. Above: Before you begin prying, use a pen knife or wallboard knife to cut the paint and paper binding mouldings at joints.

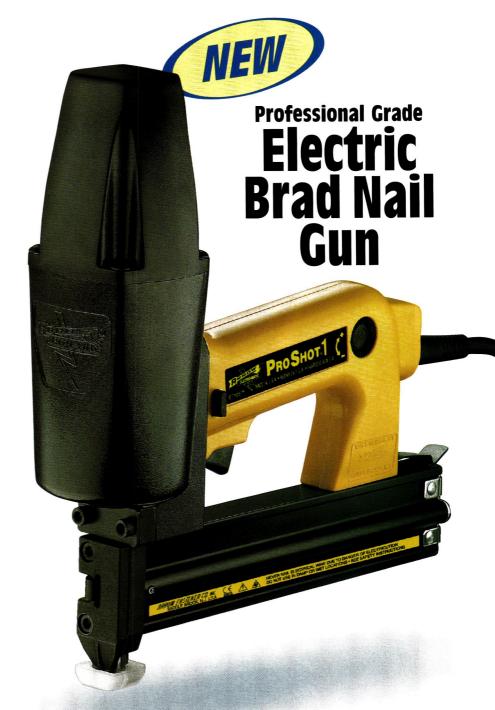


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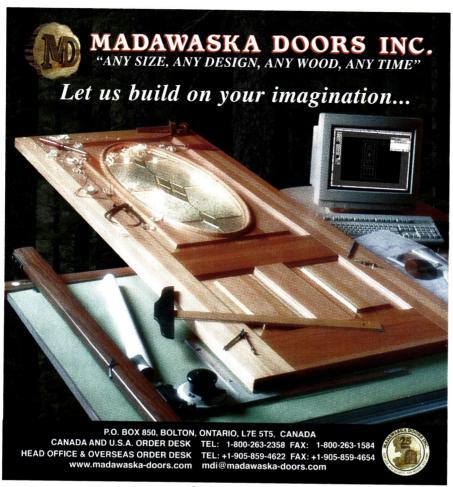


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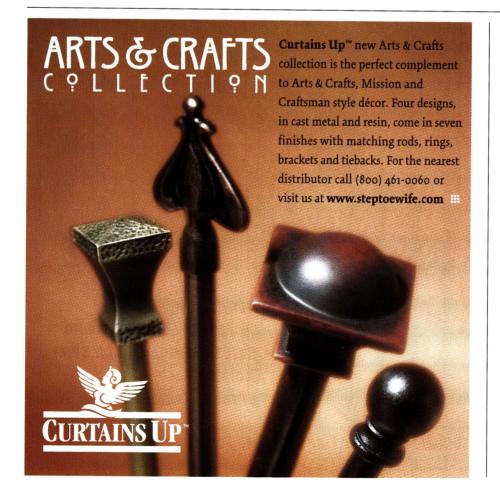
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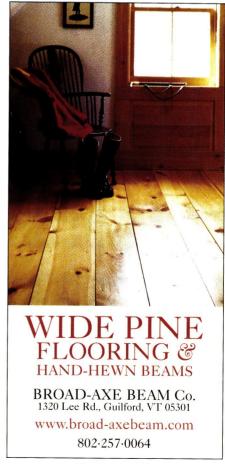




Circle no. 234

Circle no. 310







HOUSE ADVISOR





The deep roof eaves (top) are a common ca. 1900 feature, while the two-storey side bay (above) is very Victorian.

SECOND THOUGHTS

Our B&B was built in 1903. Guests marvel at the built-in cabinetry, pocket doors, original gas and electric light fixtures, a stained glass window, and beveled glass door panel. Now if we can just determine what style we are! We are the third innkeepers and have seen previous advertising that listed this as a Second Empire Victorian. We're not certain this is correct.

— PITA NELSON
PORT WASHINGTON, WISCONSIN

You are right to be skeptical. Your early 20th-century house is definitely not Second Empire, a style distinguished by the dual pitch mansard roof—and one pretty much passé by the 1870s.

The cusp of the 20th century was a

rich time in American architecture, and like many houses built then, yours shows a duke's mixture of influences. The body of the house has the boxy form of a Foursquare, yet it has been embellished with touches from several sources.

The bay window on the side is typical of Victorian houses, such as Queen Annes, while the ionic columns on your porch are classical features often seen in Colonial Revival structures. The most arresting characteristic of your house is definitely the roof, which has a pronounced kick at the eaves, a flourish popular on many types of houses by the late 1890s. The deep planciers (eave soffits) are also typical of the era and often appeared on Prairie-style houses of that period. You can see similar fashionable effects in the strong brackets under those wide eaves. In short, you have a unique, eclectic house.

century it gave homeowners access to inexpensive, easy-to-install fences. Some of them sported *fleur-de-lis* crests in imitation of cast-iron fencing. Montgomery Ward, a major retailer of this composite fencing, commented in a 1918 catalog that "A substantial looking ornamental fence is an indication of prosperity that everyone will notice."

Many iron fences were melted down in World War I scrap drives, and woven-wire fence production went almost solely commercial in World War II. One manufacturer of single and double loop ornamental fencing, Colorado Fuel and Iron, founded in 1902, is still in business, and their products are available through a single distributor, Hutchison Western in Adam City, Colorado.

Regional sales manager Bob Mitchell says that the proportion of carbon in their

FENCE ME IN

My property has some wonderful ornamental fencing from around the turn of the last century. A few sections are missing and I would like to replace them, but I haven't been able to find a source nearer than Australia!

Can you help?

Looking at modern security chain-link fences, it's hard to imagine that they evolved from something decorative. Yet iron-wire fencing in various patterns was once popular for enclosing small yards and gardens while retaining a light, airy look. When steel came on the scene at the turn of the last

Double loop woven-wire fencing—the near universal pattern from the 1920s to 1960s—is now rare, but still made.

steel fencing makes it "springy"—neither brittle nor prone to sagging. Many of their orders come from the South, he says, where ornamental wire fences have been used for decades around old houses and cemeteries.

The double loop fencing is \$190.75 per 100′ for a 4′ height (you can also order 36″ and 42″) plus shipping. Call Hutchison Western at (800) 237-9855 or visit their Web site at www.hutchison-inc.com

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GROUNDBREAKING

Not every old-house gardener can inherit deep, fluffy topsoil. When you retire the vegetable plot or annual bed this fall, get a jump on next season by grubbing out those deep-rooted weeds, or loosening the soil to work in a whole summer's worth of compost. V& B Manufacturing now has a line of 15 multi-purpose Groundbreakers Landscaping tools. These dual-headed tools have 16", 26", and 36" handles and offer pick ends, broad mattocks, axe heads, tines, and scoops. The tool head fits the handle in a patented design that eliminates the problem of tools twisting on impact. Prices range from \$13 for the 16" size to \$34 for 36" groundbreakers. Contact V & B Manufacturing at (800) 443-1987 or visit www.vbmfg.doc. Circle no. 9 on the resource card.





Keeping a historic landscape up to snuff takes a whole slew of tools. If you're like us, you're really tired of mixing all those different oil-fuel cocktails required by your two-cycle chain saw, your rototiller, your chipper-shredder, etc., and the resulting collection of receptacles all over the shed. Enter the EZ 2-Cycler, a dual chamber fueling system that mixes twocycle oil and gasoline by just setting the dial and pushing a plunger. No more funnels and measuring cups! The EZ 2-Mixer lets you mix non-volatile liquids, such as pesticides or cleaning agents. Each sells for \$34.95. Contact CCI Products at (877) 224-7763 or visit www.ezdispensers.com. Circle no. 10 on the resource card.

CORDLESS COMPOUND

Whether repairing a rotten porch floor or restoring parlor moulding, it's easier to bring the saw to your project than

vice versa. There's no better way than with cordless power tools. The Bosch 3924 Com-

pound Miter Saw, at 10" and 24 volts, is billed as the most powerful cordless saw yet. It can cut 4" x 4" posts at 90 degrees, 2" x 6" joists at a 45 degree bevel, 5/4" x 5 1/2" decking boards, and base or crown mouldings up to 5 1/4" flat on the table. A 3 1/2" sliding fence adds 7" of work

support, so you can make cuts the way you like them—angling a 4 1/4" crown moulding against the fence, for instance. Lightweight die-cast

aluminum construction lets the saw

weigh in at only 30 pounds. The 3924 sells for \$450. For the nearest dealer, contact Bosch at (877) 267-2499, or visit www.boschtools.com. Circle no. 11 on the resource card.

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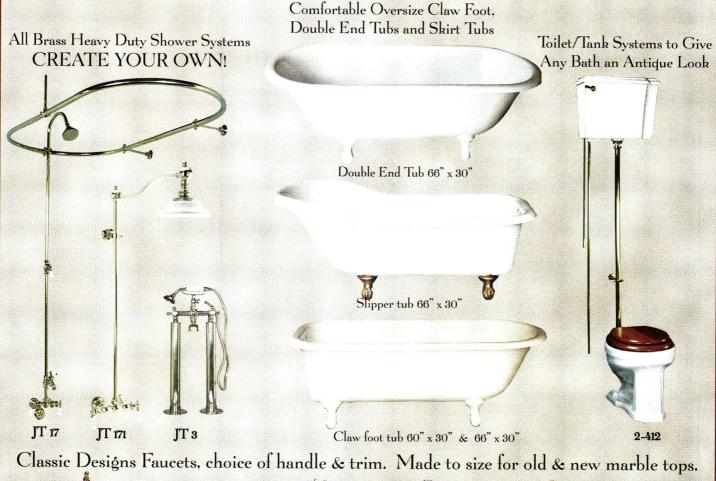
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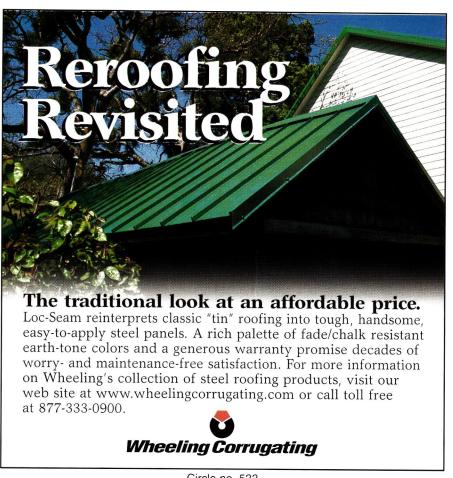


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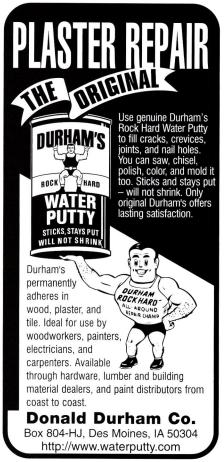
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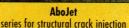






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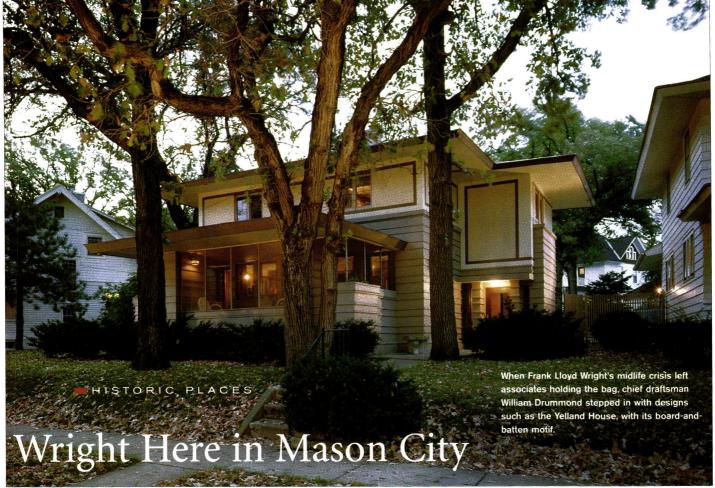








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hen settlers first broke sod near what is now Mason City, Iowa, in the 1850s, they discovered an 8' thick layer of topsoil that proved to be the most fertile cropland on the planet. There is more than dirt under that prairie. At every bend in Willow Creek and the Winnebago River, which meet in the city, are outcroppings of a creamywhite limestone that has become the city's signature building material. In addition, extensive deposits of brick-making clays underlay the area. The capital generated by these resources combined with the religious beliefs of a few leading citizens to make Mason City a star on the architectural map.

Wrightian Laboratory

In 1902 Mason City lawyer J.E.E. Markley sent his daughter to the progressive Hillside Home School near Spring Green, Wisconsin, largely for one reason: The school was run by devout Unitarians, sisters Jane and Ellen Lloyd Jones. As luck would have it, the building

that housed the school was designed by the sisters' nephew, one Frank Lloyd Wright.

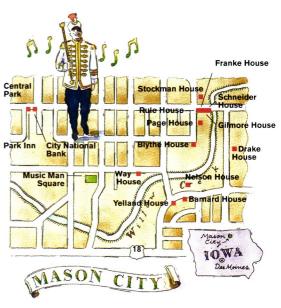
Impressed with the building, Markley hired Wright in 1908 to design a complex in downtown Mason City to contain the City National Bank, a hotel called the Park Inn, and Markley's law offices. In the words of Mason City historian Robert McCoy, the buildings "symbolized the arrival of culture and tasteful opulence" in Mason City.

The Park Inn was Wright's preliminary exercise for the much larger Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, built in 1915. Each reads as a pair of rectangular pavilions sheltering the main entrance and features broadly cantilevered pagoda roofs. The windowless City National Bank presented the image of a strong box. It was clad with one of Wright's favorite building materials—the long, low, so-called Roman bricks.

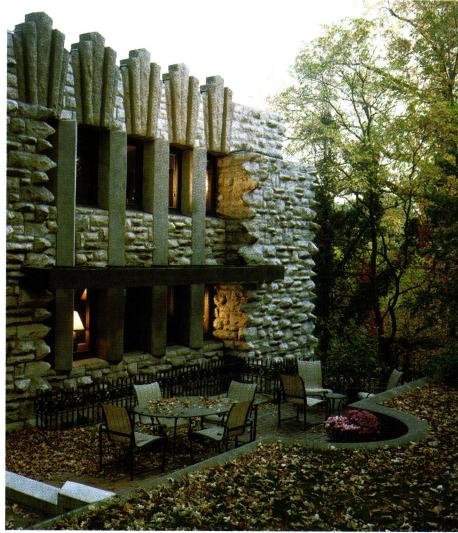
Sadly, the opulence has faded. To convert the bank to a department store, developers cut plate glass windows into the walls and inserted a mezzanine into its grand lobby.

This former architectural mecca in Iowa is staging a comeback, thanks to its musical favorite son.

BY RICHARD L. KRONICK



James Noel Smith







Courtesy of Mason City Foundation

Right: Willow Creek is the scenic dividing line between the developments of Rock Crest and Rock Glen. Top: The Melson House, nicknamed the Castle, seems to rise above the creek as a natural extension of its limestone cliffs. Above: The Park Inn, which has been closed for years, served Wright as a practice piece for his famous Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.



The hotel has lost much of its original ornamentation and has been closed for years. Both buildings suffer fundamentally from the urban exodus common to cities large and small, a problem being addressed creatively by the Mason City Foundation (more about this later).

In 1908, before the bank-hotel complex was completed, Markley's neighbors George and Eleanor Stockman had a Wright-designed house built in Mason City. The house is one of the few built examples of the Wright design called "Fireproof House for \$5,000," when it was featured in a 1907 issue of *The Ladies Home Journal*. The reinforced concrete structure is a compact Foursquare with appendages on opposite sides for an entrance foyer and a sun porch. In recent years the house was moved to 530 First Street Northeast, beautifully restored, and is now open to the public.

By the time he came to Mason City, Frank Lloyd Wright was famous and his services in steady demand. He cracked under fame's pressure, however, and in 1909 he left his family and his architecture practice in Oak Park, Illinois, to slip off to Europe with a client's wife.

These scandalous goings on in Oak Park left Wright's associates to pick up the slack in Mason City. His chief draftsman, William Drummond, supervised construction of the bank-hotel and also designed a house in 1910 for the Curtis Yelland family. The wood-framed house, at 7 River Heights Drive, is a good example of the Prairie School motif called board-and-batten siding, wherein wide and narrow boards alternate to accentuate the horizontal lines of the building.

Achieving the Dream

Because Wright and his followers believed that every house should be fully integrated with the land, they dreamed of designing entire communities rather than just isolated houses. That dream—which now fell to Wright's most talented associates, Walter Burley Griffin and Griffin's wife, Marion Mahony Griffin—was more fully realized in Mason City than anywhere else in America.

Markley law partner James Blythe and another leading citizen, Joshua Melson, hired the Griffins in 1911. Melson purchased land atop limestone cliffs with potential sites overlooking Willow Creek. Blythe held land across from Melson in a sunny glen. The four developed Rock Crest and Rock Glen as communities fully integrated with nature, reserving the creek banks as private parkland for the homeowners.

The 1912 house that the Griffins designed at 56 River Heights Drive may be the best example anywhere of integrating a house with its natural setting. Viewed from across the creek, the limestone house appears to be a supernatural extension of the cliff, culminating in over-sized voussoirs that project from the upper-storey windows. It's easy to see why the house's local nickname is the Castle. Due largely to Melson's contentious personality, this was the only house the Griffins designed in Rock Crest, although in 1914, local architect Einar Broaten designed the Prairie-style Drake House for a site on Melson's tract.

Rock Glen fared better. Between 1912 and 1914, the Griffins designed the Page and Rule houses near the north end of the development and the Blythe House around the corner; each presents a different image. The massive Page House stands on a base of rough limestone. The stucco Rule House has thick piers at the corners, surmounted by recessed art glass windows. The exterior surface of the concrete Blythe House is embossed with a pattern that suggests the pre-Columbian art of Central America.

As with Wright, a sudden change in circumstances ended the Griffins' relationship with Mason City. They moved to Australia in 1912 when Walter won the competition to design the new capital city, Canberra. Wright associate Barry Byrne continued their work in Rock Glen, designing three



Richard L. Kronick



Christian Korab



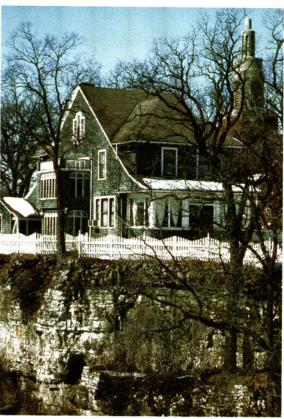
Christian Kora

Top: The Stockman House, now operated as a museum, presents newly restored views of Wrightian interiors. Above: One of the few built examples of Wright's "Fireproof House for \$5,000," the Stockman House was designed in 1907 not for a client but for *The Ladies Home Journal*. Left: The Blythe House, designed by Walter Burley Griffin, is embossed with designs suggestive of pre-Columbian art



Christian Korab

Above: The massive Griffindesigned Page House stands on a base of rough limestone. Right: Not every house in Mason City is Prairie style. The 1908 shingle-style Queen Anne Way House overlooks Willow Creek



Richard L. Kronic

houses along the street of the Rule House between 1915 and 1917.

Drive-bys

Many other houses in Mason City are worth a look. One is the Barnard House, an Arts & Crafts bungalow designed in 1909 by Joshua Melson and directly across the street from his castle. Also worth finding are two more Prairie-style houses by Einar Broaten at 811 N. Adams Avenue and 521 N. Washington Avenue. The creekside 1908 Way House, a graceful exercise in the Queen Anne-Shingle Style, was designed by E.R. Bogardus. The Queen Anne house at 314 S. Pennsylvania is noteworthy as the boyhood home of Mason City's favorite son, Meredith Willson, composer of "The Music Man"—and therein lies a tale of urban development.

Downtown Revitalization

Rock Crest-Rock Glen may be replaced by the Music Man Square as the most visited architectural wonder in Mason City. As its name suggests, the square pays homage to

Meredith Willson's most famous play. Scheduled for its grand opening on Willson's 100th birthday, May 18, 2002, the complex is an ambitious amalgam of tourist attraction, convention center, and arts center developed by the Mason City Foundation. The centerpiece, which opened this spring, is an indoor Disneyesque streetscape that brings to life the Main Street of Willson's River City. Across the "street" from the shops, a façade made up as the River City High School Auditorium is actually the entrance to the convention center. Behind the shops are several theaters, a museum of Willsonia (yes, there are 76 trombones), and a music education facility dedicated to the children of Mason City. The Mason City Foundation's next strategic move will be to restore the nearby Park Inn to accommodate tourists downtown. Some historic preservationists wondering how to breathe life into old buildings could take a lesson from Mason City.

Richard Kronick is a writer and architectural historian based in Minneapolis.

Historic Lodging

While you're in the Music Man Square area, visit Marjorie's Tea House (320 S. Pennsylvania Avenue), a restored Queen Anne where you can order either meals or high tea. For a good map and detailed descriptions of Mason City, look for *The Mason City Walking Tour Guide* (1994) by Robert McCoy, edited by Jim Smith. You can find it at the Stockman House (641-421-3666), operated as a museum by the Cerro Gordo County Historical Society.

If you want to stay in a B&B near Mason City, you have just one choice. There are some other lodgings within less than an hour's drive, however.

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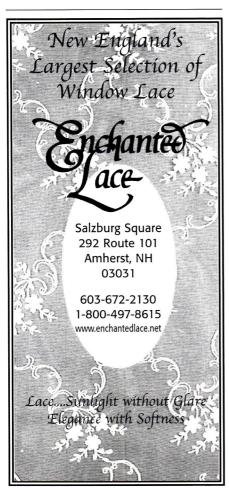
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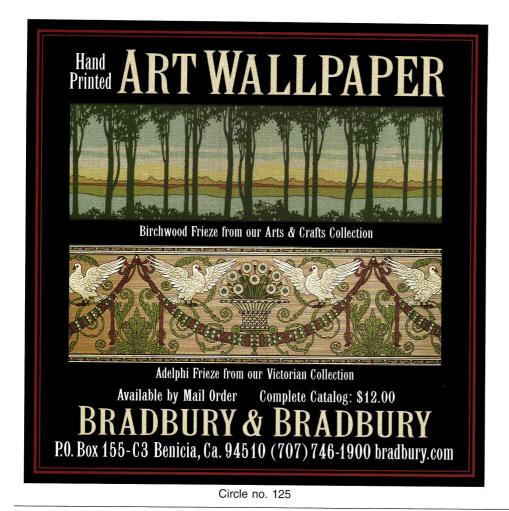




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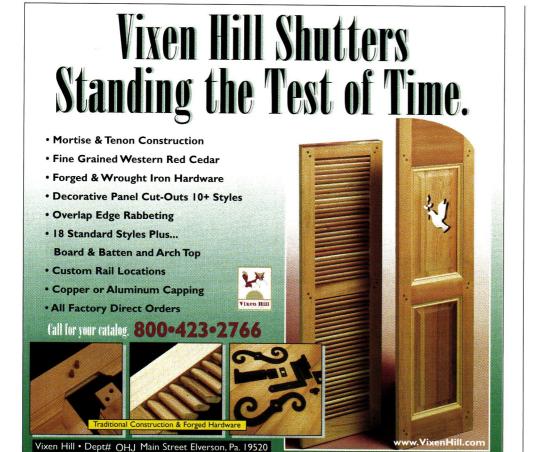
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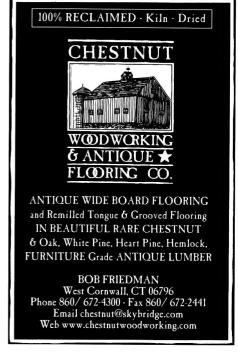
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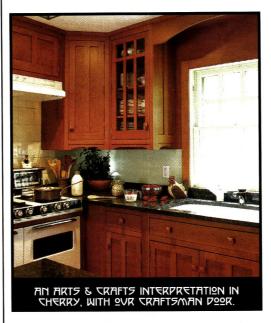




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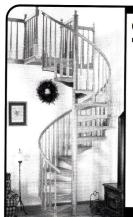
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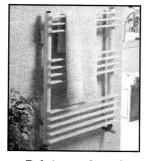
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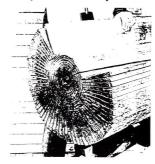
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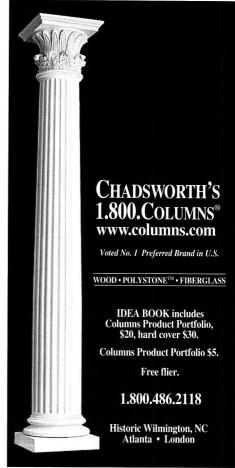
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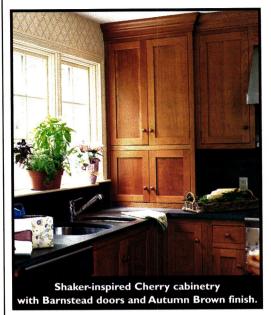


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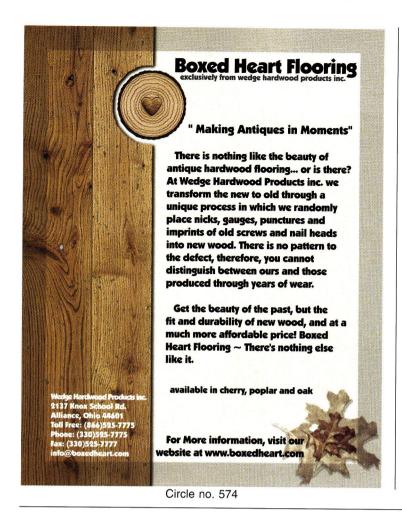
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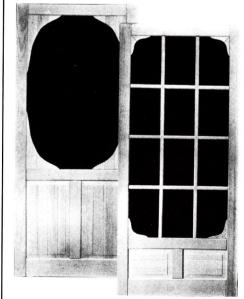


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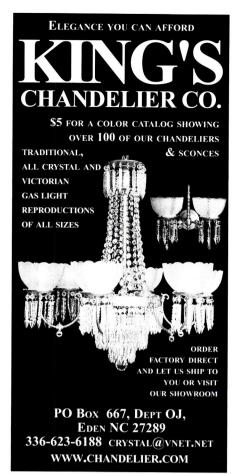
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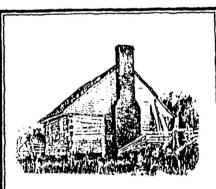
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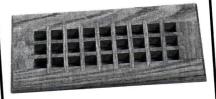






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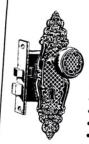
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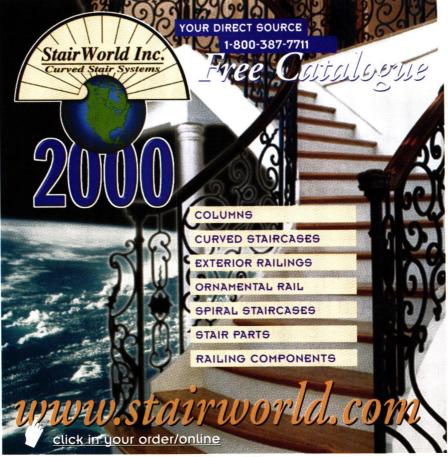
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Apply second coat of saturant saturant to to wet mat

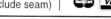


adiacent area



12.Apply 2nd coat of saturant (include seam)







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of overlap (both

10.Cut down center 11.Remove mat

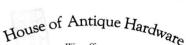
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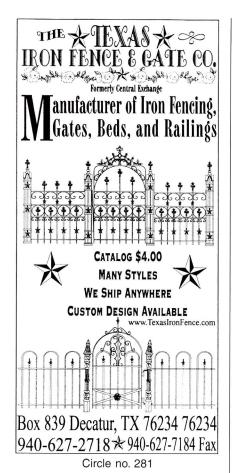


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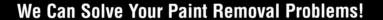
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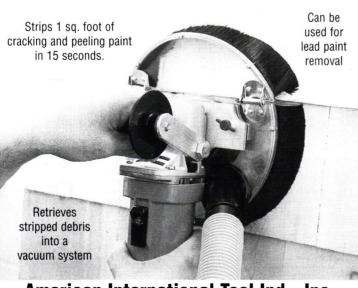
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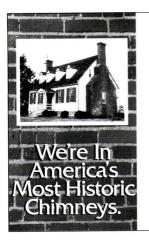
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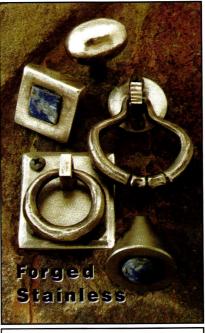
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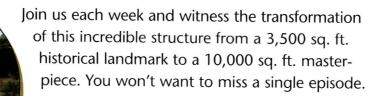
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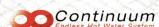


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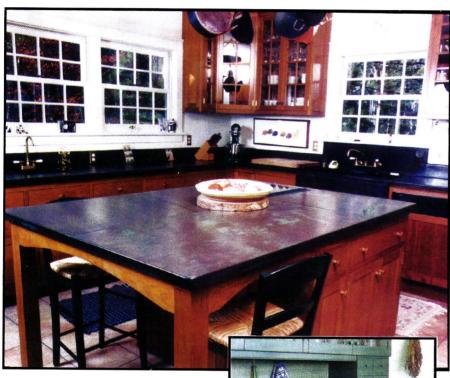
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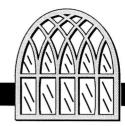
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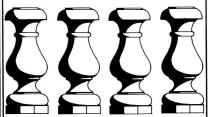
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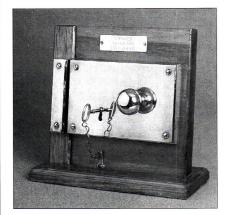
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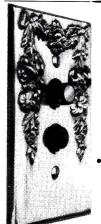
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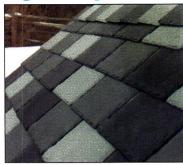
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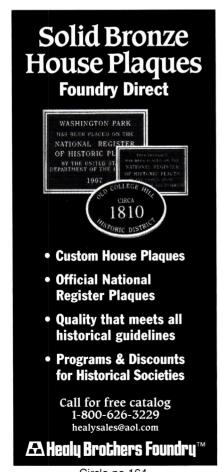
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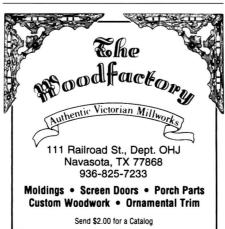
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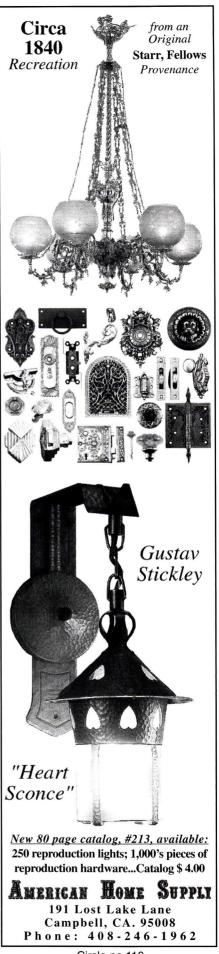
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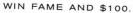
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RE MUDDLING Opinion



PEEK-A-BOO!

Don't look now, but the gables peering above this rooftop like twin periscopes appear to be the last visible remnants of a Queen Anne. The decorative bargeboards hint that she might have been real eye candy in her heyday. We might take the view that she's now shielding her modest self from prying eyes-a likely scenario given the lack of windows on her new exterior. It's anyone's guess what she might have looked like originally, but California is known for its wood-sided Victorian-era houses, such as this 1887 gem in Claremont (at right). Reader Tony Staten comments of his Remuddling nominee, "It tops them all."



If you spot a classic example of remuddling, send us clear color prints. We'll award you \$100 if your photos are selected. The message is more dramatic if you send along a picture of a similar unremuddled building. (Original photography only, please; no clippings.) Remuddling Editor, Old-House Journal, 1000 Potomac St. NW, Suite 102, Washington, DC 20007

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